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[THE OPIUM SMOKERS.]

THE BONDAGE OF BRANDON.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Are some things which woman may tempt man to.

Abel.—We must perform our task together: Spurn me not.

Cain.—If it must be so—well, then, What shall I do?

Cain: a Mystery.

A few days after Reginald Welby's declaration of love was abruptly interrupted, Alice returned home.

She had prolonged her stay at the Priory as long as she could do so consistently with those laws of politeness and etiquette by which society is ruled and governed. Her first thought was of Reginald, whom she had not seen since the *al-fresco* entertainment of strawberries and cream in the hay-field. She had remarked that his manner was excited, and she saw him speak a few supplementary words to Lady Brandon before the party went back to the Priory, but of their nature and purport she was altogether ignorant.

Intimate as she was with Blanche she did not like to question her about so delicate a matter; nor, had she been inclined to do so, would she have had sufficient tact and address to accomplish her purpose satisfactorily.

She found Reginald in his bedroom.

To her amazement, he was engaged in packing up his things. A box stood before him, in which he had already placed a score or so of books.

Alice conjectured that Lady Brandon had refused him, but she said:

"Are you going to town, Reginald?"

"Yes," he replied, moodily.

"But Lady Blanche—"

"She is the cause of my sudden departure."

"What has she done, Reggie? Has she said 'No,' point blank?" said his sister, kindly.

"She has not done that, but she treated me in a way which deprived me of all hope."

"Since you say so, I suppose she did," exclaimed

Alice; "but, nevertheless, I should very much like to hear what she did say."

"She told me that she was not prepared to talk about anything so serious," replied Reginald; "that I took her by surprise, and that I was so young that very likely I did not know my own mind, and should afterwards regret my precipitancy. She liked me very well, and nothing would give her greater pleasure than to be a second sister to me, but she thought it better for both of us that we should wait some time, during which I should meet with some one far handsomer and worthier of my love than herself. If, at the expiration of a few months, I still felt towards her as at present, she would be glad to resume the conversation, which she hoped I would excuse her for bringing to a termination. She then left me. To my mind, all that amounts to a polite refusal; so I am off to the Continent. A few years' travel will not hurt me."

"It will not do you any harm, certainly," she answered, "but you are making yourself miserable without a cause. What I dreaded has actually happened. You have fallen in love with the syren charms of Lady Brandon. From what I know of her she would make you a good and excellent wife, and I should like to call her my sister-in-law. You think, however, that she will not have you for a husband, and with your habitual hastiness you are going, goodness only knows where—to the Pyramids, perhaps, or the source of the Blue Nile. I have listened attentively to your account of your interview with Blanche, and I think you are altogether wrong and mistaken. The citadel may be strong, and the garrison well provisioned, but to listen to you at all is a confession of weakness. But if you lay good and continuous siege to her, take my word for it she will surrender at discretion in less than a fortnight."

Reginald shook his head.

"I say, yes, sir," continued Alice, "and I will not hear of your going away in this manner. Unpack your things, or I shall do it for you."

Reginald sat down on the edge of his bed, and seemed to be in a state of irresolution. He was vacillating.

"Now listen to me, Reggie," exclaimed Alice, decisively.

"You know I am always delighted to do so," he replied; "but clever as you undoubtedly are, Alice, I question whether you are skilful enough to minister to a mind diseased."

"What nonsense!—You fancy yourself miserable, and you derive a morbid sort of pleasure from thinking you are a persecuted man, which is all very silly and childish. You are a man in many things, Reggie, but nothing more than a boy in many others. You may be able to construe Homer or go through Euclid, but you have no more knowledge of the heart or nature of a woman than a baby."

He smiled.

"You must return to the charge once more; and, if you are repulsed, once again after that," continued Alice. "Depend upon it you will at last be successful. The idea of your going away is absurd and ridiculous, so much so that I forbid it, and to show you that I am in earnest I shall unpack all these things, and put them in their proper place again."

Alice Welby was a determined young lady, and she suited the action to the word by making an attack upon the boxes, which she speedily emptied of their contents, Reginald looking on all the while as if he were a martyr and obliged to put up with some intolerable hardship.

When he thought calmly over the matter, however, he was compelled to admit that he was about to act in rather too hasty a manner. He had the greatest confidence in his sister's good sense and sound judgment, and he was willing to confess that the stake for which he played was not so irredeemably lost as he had, in the first poignancy of his chagrin and disappointment, supposed. Instead of going abroad he resumed his visits at the Priory, and was once more thrown into the society of Lady Brandon.

Her ladyship had in reality conceived a certain kind of affection for Reginald Welby, but she was deterred from accepting his offer by many reasons. It must be remembered that she had really loved Sir Lawrence Allingford, and though his apparent callousness, ill-treatment, and neglect, had alienated

her heart from him to some extent, she was unable to forget him altogether. She felt that even were she to marry Reginald Welby she could never love him as she should wish. She could entertain the highest regard for him and look up to him and study him in every way, but she would be unable to love him.

Love, in its sacred, holy, divine sense, was a thing of the past—a thing to dream of, and make a summer reverie of, but never to experience. She looked upon Sir Lawrence Allingford as lost to her for ever. Her interpretation of his absence was, first that he was afraid of being arrested as the murderer of Girling, whom she supposed to be dead, as she had heard nothing of him for some time. In the second place, she surmised that he had grown tired of her perpetual plots, schemes, and intrigues, and had sought peace and quietness in a foreign land. This idea caused her great disquietude and uneasiness at first, but after a while her acute and incessant pain wore off, and she only experienced a sinking of the heart and a choking sensation when she thought of the lost Sir Lawrence, upon whom she had in former days lavished so much affection.

Reginald Welby was everything that she could desire for a protector and guardian for life, but her guilty soul recoiled at the idea of linking itself to one so good, so proud, and so religious as he was. Sir Lawrence Allingford knew what she was. He was well aware that she was a murderer—for she had killed her sister—a kidnapper, and in intent in that instance also one upon whose hands the stain of blood indelibly rested; but his love—his passion—his fancy—had been sufficiently strong to overcome his natural repugnance to such deeds, and he would have married her in spite of her guiltiness.

Would Reginald Welby do that? It was extremely problematical. If he discovered her to be all that Sir Lawrence had known her, most likely he would have shrunk from her, and it was this consideration which influenced her to a great extent in not encouraging Reginald, as she otherwise would have done. The Earl of Brandon would not have objected to him as the husband of his sister, for the Welbys were a good old stock, and had some of the best blood in the county in their veins.

If Girling should not, after all, be dead, her life would be simply one of greater terror and more intolerable bondage than ever, because one word breathed in the ear of Reginald would consign her to unutterable misery. The shadows which had encompassed her for so long a time had partially left her. She was continually apprehensive that they would close round her again, and envelop her with a still denser funeral gloom.

A week or two passed away, and Reginald Welby took heart of grace. He loved Blanche so fondly and so dearly that he could have passed a lifetime by her side as her most humble servant, but he wished, if such a thing was within the limits of possibility, to be something nearer to her than a mere equir and hanger-on sort of lover. He came up to her one day when she was feeding her peacocks, under the shade of one of the cedar trees, for which the Priory, amongst other things, was celebrated, and said:

"I think I should like to be a peacock at Kirkdale."
"Why should you?" she replied, throwing one of her pets a piece of bread.

"Because you would feed me."
She smiled, and replied:
"I don't know that. If you were not good I might leave you to starve."

"You would never be so cruel."
They walked slowly into the house together.

The great difficulty with Reginald was always to get to the point. He was a good hand at beating about the bush, but he was always afraid to come to close quarters. He was about to blunder into a second confession of love, and ask her ladyship if she would look more favourably upon his suit, when a servant approached holding a letter in his hand.

Lady Brandon took it listlessly, but as she glanced at the superscription, she uttered a low cry.

Reginald Welby looked on, with his mind in a whirl, wondering whose handwriting could thus affect Lady Brandon.

The first sparks of jealousy were arising in his breast.

He had cause for perturbation, although he knew it not, for the handwriting was that of Sir Lawrence Allingford.

CHAPTER XXVII

Ye guardian spirits to whom man is dear,
From these foul demons shield the midnight gloom!
Angels of fancy and of love, be near!

Castle of Indolence.
A wicked elfin roved this land around,
Whose joys proceeded from the grief he found—
"Envy" his name. The Birth of Flattery.

A LETTER from Sir Lawrence Allingford was a complete surprise to Lady Brandon. For months

past she had eagerly expected such an epistle, but latterly she had given up the idea. She had schooled herself diligently and brought herself into a submissive state of mind, which is the invariable result of misfortune and calamity. Reginald Welby had, to a certain extent, usurped the place formerly held by Sir Lawrence in her heart, and she had come to regard him favourably, although as yet, more as a brother than a lover, or that dearest of all relations—a husband.

Marriage is the most sacred of human ties, and as such she regarded it. She had fondly anticipated a union with the baronet, but, owing to recent events, she had given up the expectation, and striven with all her might and main to drive him from a stubborn heart, in which he had reigned in too autocratic a manner.

Sir Lawrence Allingford's letter produced an effect upon her nervous system such as would be brought about by half-a-dozen people throwing their hands down simultaneously upon the keys of a piano. It dashed against the sensitive fibres of her heart, as in the latter instance, the inharmonious discord would clang upon the tympanum of the ear.

With trembling hands and quivering lips she broke the seal, and began to read the contents of the letter; it was written in a bold, well-defined masculine hand. The footman having done his duty, retired. Reginald Welby was looking on without any apparent astonishment, although he had not failed to notice her ladyship's agitation. Before Lady Blanche commenced its perusal, she held the letter in her hand, and said:

"Will you allow me to read my letter, Mr. Welby?"

"Certainly," he replied. "Don't mind me."

Walking towards the window, he amused himself by looking out upon the lawn and admiring the sombre branches of a venerable cedar-tree. It was very warm and the peacocks, resplendent in gold and azure, had taken refuge under the boughs, whose dense foliage protected them from the scorching rays of the burning sun. The gnats flew about in little swarms, seeking whom they might devour; while the gaddies darted to and fro, looking venomous and ill-conditioned. It was the hour when the spotted snake leaves its hole in the ground and basks in the sunshine, darting out its forked tongue, like a thing of evil, on the approach of a stranger. The leaves hung upon the trees in a listless manner, and even the blades of grass drooped their slender heads. The sunflower was the only daring object that ventured to turn its face with innate audacity towards the great fire-centre.

Lady Brandon cast her eye over the ink-stained page, and read what was written upon it. Sir Lawrence Allingford said that he had left England in great haste, because, at the time, he firmly believed himself to be the murderer of Girling.

"I saw him lying upon the floor," he said, "smothered in blood, and I could come to no other conclusion than that I had slain him. This was not a pleasant reflection—far from it. Terrible thoughts at once suggested themselves to my harassed mind. Frightful anticipations of the cord and the gibbet: a public trial and a still more public execution flitted before me, determining me to quit, for a season, the land of my birth and seek a refuge on the shores of a foreign land. I lost no time in putting my design in execution. I immediately turned some of my property into ready money, and started *en route* for Constantinople. In that city I remained some time, although I now write from Naples. The dreary life of the Orientals soothed me and pleased my fancy. Feeling the deprivation of your loved society very acutely, I sought for some means of allaying my mental distress, and, in the land of hashish and of opium, I was not long kept in ignorance of the merits of the last named drug. At first I took it in small quantities. Gradually I increased the dose, until I became as confirmed an opium-eater as the melancholy individual whose vicissitudes De Quincey has described so graphically.

"Opium acquired such a hold over me in the course of a few weeks, and exercised so great a fascination over me, that I was quickly subjugated and held in thrall by it. No sooner was I out of bed in the morning than I called for my pipe, and inhaled a few cubic feet of smoke. The vaporous poison penetrated my brain, and I was metamorphosed from a listless unenergetic being into a dreaming madman. The man who smokes opium, or who eats it (the effect is the same in both instances), becomes, in time, like a confirmed drunkard, who is unable to hold up his head unless stimulated by or under the dominion of drink.

"During all this time I had not for one moment forgotten you. When indulging in ecstatic visions brought about by the fumes of the opium, which I knew was sapping the foundations of my constitution, your charming face was ever before me. Were I in imagination in a forest on a moonlit summer's eve, with fays and fairies dancing around me beneath the greenwood tree, the pargon of the band would

be ever like you, resplendent with an everlasting beauty. A favourite hallucination of mine is that all the lovely women on the face of the earth occupy an open space before which is a throne, on which I am seated. Descending from the throne, I wander amidst the ranks of beauty, and select one in your image; carrying her up the steps of the throne and seating her by my side. At last I thought it absolutely imperative that I should make some efforts to break myself of the pernicious habit into which I had fallen. With that end in view, I quitted Constantinople and started for Naples in one of the steamers belonging to the *Mesageries Imperiales*, and came to Naples; but arrived there, I was obliged to resort once more to my favourite stimulant, without whose aid I could not so much as lift up my head. When I left it off I sank into the most horrible state of stupor, languor, and profound melancholy, and feared I should be driven to the extremity of committing suicide, for adverse as I am to the idea of taking my own life, I was convinced that the despair into whose abyss I had fallen, was depriving me of volition and making me its abject slave.

"After I had been some short time at Naples, it occurred to me that it would be more satisfactory to myself, as well as to all parties concerned, if I took steps to discover whether Girling really was killed, as I had all along anticipated and fully believed. Accordingly, I employed agents, and sent them to London. They were gone some time. On their return, they informed me that this man was not dead.

"Here was a startling communication for me. I had no occasion to fly from my own country to find safety under the roof of the foreigner. I was overwhelmed with joy and gladness. You may imagine the delight with which I received this totally unexpected news. My first thought was of you. I had hitherto refrained from writing to you, because I did not know what to say to you in excuse or extenuation. My conduct was hasty and precipitate, and unquestionably cruel to you. Could I hope for your forgiveness? This was the question that I revolved in my mind. Would you have cancelled our engagement, repudiated our betrothal, and have sought happiness at the hands of another? These several queries occupied my mind for some time, and in the end I resolved upon writing to you. The result of that resolution is the letter I am now inditing. May I ask, dearest Blanche, for an answer, which will set my doubts at rest? Let me know my fate. I tell you frankly that I am not now the man I used to be. Opium has made sad ravages with my constitution, and I have embarked in a fatal course without considering whether the strong current will lead me. With you as my pilot I might hope to attain a harbour and a place of safety: abandoned to myself, I am firmly convinced that in the end I shall perish miserably, and be driven, a broken man and a disastrous wreck, to a premature grave. It is in your power to prevent this. I do not know that I have the right to tax your good-nature so severely as to ask you to ally yourself to a man for whom you can have little or no respect. I am the victim of circumstances; you are my beacon—my pole-star—my only hope. To you I hold my outstretched hands, and say, "save me." Will you respond to the appeal? If not I am lost for ever and ever. Your refusal will be equivalent to consigning me to irredeemable perdition."

He ended by saying that he should shortly be in England, and asking her to send her reply to his letter to his town house.

A tumultuous flood of thoughts, fancies, and recollections rushed over Lady Brandon's mind in a boisterous inundation on reading this heartrending epistle. She had often heard of the fatal effects of opium, and she dreaded that Sir Lawrence had in reality sealed his doom. Was it not too much to ask her to become his bride after what had occurred? The wound that his heartless conduct had inflicted had healed now and cicatrized; but his proposal was equivalent to a request to her to pull off the bandages and open the sore once more.

"Instead of writing to me when he should have done so, and affording me the consolation I had a right to expect," thought Lady Blanche, "he was stupefying himself with opium, from the influence of which he confesses himself unable to divorce his infatuated inclination."

She continued standing in the centre of the room, where she was when the man-servant brought her the letter. The more she thought, the more agitated she became. The blood seemed to rush to her head. A feeling of dizziness, or of vertigo, took possession of her, and she felt that if she did not instantly sit down she should fall upon the ground. Specks floated before her eyes, and she sank into a chair, looking dreamily down upon the carpet, with a dazed expression, like that worn by the faces of lunatics who have gone melancholy mad. In her confusion the letter fell from her hand to the floor, and lay there plainly conspicuous.

Reginald Welby was going to the door. A woman's manner had been a complex one, she was not that she had. Her name was A year but since restraint move in panion and Mimi, alisting betw During t been ena she had a score of people. A score of scowl st countena overspre black and stood cle which for entire fra When At tim casionally you would thing e however, Atlantic parently and este lot. But tually settled on smoke ar Mimi v secret. They society f not nice. Someti of lookin that som them. Mimi who very panion of her pa was able her the r Mimi hand to l "How I think? Reginald toward l and saw to upset she imag her lady the floor idea that dition in Mimi mo greatest Lady B rapidly passed up was too c cornered at such skill "Are claimed seemed a apprehen Blanche Seeing sal velt During alarmed, and was serious t "Shal exclaim "Wha looking "Lad "The coldly.

Reginald Welby turned round, wondering what the matter was. He made a movement, as if he were going to render her ladyship some assistance, when the door of the room opened.

A woman appeared on the threshold, whose demeanour was ladylike. She was self-possessed, and had an air of what is called 'repose' about her. In person she was tall, of a thin, graceful figure; her complexion was dark, like her raven tresses; she was six or seven-and-twenty; and although her features were so regular as to be almost severely classical, she was not absolutely pretty, yet no one could deny that she had a sort of statuesque beauty.

Her name was Mimi Zedfern.

A year ago she had been Alice Welby's governess, but since that lady had been emancipated from the restraint and control of the schoolroom, in order to move in the great world, Mimi had been her companion and her factotum: her flatterer on this occasion and her mentor on the other. Alice did not like Mimi, although there was a species of friendship existing between them. She was rather afraid of her. During the long time they had been together, she had been enabled to observe Mimi closely; consequently, she had a further insight into her character than most people. More than once, more than twice, more than a score of times, Miss Welby had noticed a malignant scowl start up and overshadow the statue-like Mimi's countenance. She had seen that scowl expand and overspread her whole countenance until it looked black and ugly. All the beauty fled then, and she stood clearly revealed as one who indulged in thoughts which found a reflection in her eyes, her forehead, her entire frame.

When these fits were upon her, Mimi was satanic.

At times she was quiet and gentle enough. Occasionally a placid smile appeared on her face, and you would have taken her for a shepherdess or something equally pastoral and amiable. Mimi was, however, to all who knew her, like some parts of the Atlantic Ocean—that is, she was unfathomable. Apparently without ambition, she commanded the respect and esteem of those who were contented with their lot. But there was a fierce, raging fire burning continually below the surface. The deep gloom which settled on her brow occasionally was the fuliginous smoke arising from the flames of the internal furnace.

Mimi was one of those strange beings who have a secret.

They are often met with. People who mix in society frequently stumble against them. They are not nice companions.

Sometimes they shake and shiver, and have a way of looking over their shoulders as if they were afraid that some minion of the law was standing behind them.

Mimi was staying at the Priory with Alice Welby, who very rarely went anywhere without the company of her early days, who enjoyed the confidence of her parents, and was useful in many ways, for Alice was able to talk to her on every occasion and make her the recipient of her confidence.

Mimi advanced into the room, and holding out her hand to Reginald said:

"How do you do; we have not met before, to-day, I think?"

Reginald returned her greeting, but looked anxiously toward Lady Brandon. Mimi followed his glance, and saw in a moment that something had occurred to upset her ladyship's mental equilibrium; at first she imagined that some scene had taken place between her ladyship and Reginald. The letter lying upon the floor arrested her attention, and as she saw it, the idea that Reginald had anything to do with the condition in which Lady Brandon was, faded away. Mimi made a forward movement, and exhibited the greatest concern, but as she crossed the room to where Lady Brandon was sitting, she stooped down and rapidly picked up the letter. The illegal appropriation passed unnoticed by either Reginald or Blanche. One was too ill to remark it, the other was too much concerned at her illness to be able to take cognizance of such skilful sleight of hand.

"Are you unwell, my dear Lady Brandon?" exclaimed Mimi, in honeyed accents. Her manner seemed anxious, and her voice was tinged with gentle apprehension.

Blanche gave her no answer.

Seeing that the case required a slight application of sal volatile, Mimi looked about the room for some. During her circuit of the apartment Reginald grew alarmed, for the woman he loved looked so pale and wax-like that he thought there was something serious the matter with her.

"Shall I ring the bell? I think I had better!" he exclaimed.

"What for?" replied the strong-minded Mimi, looking at him.

"Lady Brandon is so ill."

"There is nothing the matter with her," she said, coldly. "I will soon revive her. She is only mentally

stupefied; there is, in point of fact, little the matter with her."

"She has been upset."

"So I suppose."

"The fact is, she received a letter, which caused all this perturbation—at least, I suppose so. She was well enough before that, but she had no sooner read it than she turned faint, and tottered towards the chair in which she is now reclining."

"Do you know where there is any sal volatile or something of that kind?" asked Mimi.

"No; I wish I did."

Lady Brandon looked up, and said in a low voice: "I am very well. It is only a constitutional weakness."

The joy that Reginald felt at her recovery beamed upon his countenance; Mimi noticed it, and the malignant scowl, which I have already alluded to, occupied her face. It was only a passing cloud, however, for a moment afterwards her features were the same as ever, serene and placid, and not in the least distorted by passion.

There was an antipathy between the governess and Lady Brandon; they had never liked one another. Blanche especially detested Mimi. She rarely spoke to her if she could avoid it. Alice Welby had often asked her friend why she had such an aversion to Mimi, but the only answer she could obtain was:

"Oh, I can't tell you, but I don't like her. We have our likes and our dislikes. I like you, I dislike her, will that answer satisfy you?"

The aversion was mutual, for Mimi was no friend of Lady Brandon's.

"Are you better now?" asked Reginald, with great and marked solicitude.

"Much better," she replied, in a firmer tone.

"I am delighted to hear it."

"I am so much myself, that I shall be glad to go for a walk in the garden; will you accompany me?"

"With pleasure," returned Reginald, who was rejoiced to have the opportunity.

Without bestowing so much as a look on Mimi, or giving her a word of thanks for coming to her assistance, Lady Brandon took Reginald's arm, and walked towards one of the windows, which was partially open and through which they would be able to step upon the lawn. Mimi looked triumphant; her hand sought her pocket, and her fingers closed upon the letter, which she had been at such pains to appropriate and conceal.

Just before Blanche reached the window, she turned round with a jerk and exclaimed:

"My letter!"

Reginald looked around the room.

She felt in her pockets, but without success.

"I must have dropped it," she added. "Do you see it anywhere?"

"I am sorry to say I do not," replied Reginald.

"Is it not on the floor?"

"I really cannot see it."

"How very odd."

"Yes, it is strange."

"Will you kindly look on the chair where I was sitting?"

Reginald did so, but without success.

"You cannot find it?" she asked.

"It is not here."

He rejoined her. Lady Blanche trembled so much when she again took his arm that he dreaded lest she would fall.

In the meantime Mimi had disappeared.

She had glided from the room, without her sudden and abrupt disappearance being remarked by either Lady Brandon or Reginald Welby.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Such the gay splendour, the luxurious state
Of Caliphs old, who on the Tigris shore,
In mighty Bagdad, populous and great,
Held their bright court.

Near the pavilions where we slept, still ran
Soft tinkling streams, and dashing waters fell,
And sobbing breezes sighed. Thomson.

SIR LAWRENCE ALLINGFORD came back to England, as he had told Lady Blanche he intended. On the journey he refrained from touching the opium he had spoken about in his letter. It cost him an effort to do so, but he succeeded in checking his inclination. He had no sooner arrived in London, than his propensity gained so strong a hold over him that he was unable to resist the temptation.

He had a house near one of the fashionable squares of the West End, and to this he repaired. It was a small house, but one of the most remarkable in London, owing to the way in which it was furnished and fitted up. Thousands of people passed by it every day, but as they looked at its unpretending exterior, they never dreamed of the luxurious magnificence which was to be discovered within. The drawing-rooms were arranged in a manner that was unique,

while it was unrivalled. The tables were made of solid silver, and this was the principal expense to which the owner of the house had gone. Everything was very simple, and yet sweetly pretty. Instead of a wainscoting around the room, there was a border of flowers, about a foot wide. The boards had been taken up, and a leaden receptacle put down, which was filled with real mould, in which the plants lived and flourished. Orange-trees were placed here and there, and, when in blossom, arrested the attention of the visitor by their freshness and luxuriant growth. There were innumerable fountains in each room. The baronet was passionately fond of the tinkling sound of the water falling melodiously into the marble basins. There were some fountains which threw forth wine and perfumes, but these were cunningly supplied from rooms above, in which small casks of vinous preparations and odorous mixtures were concealed.

The smoking-room was on the ground floor. This adjoined the bath-room. Both of these apartments were handsomely adorned and sumptuously furnished. The bath itself was of Carrara marble. The water was supplied through the long, tapering necks and bills of the two golden swans which stood at the lower extremity. A perfect grove of citron-trees shed their sweet perfume on all around, whilst their foliage afforded a place of shelter for innumerable birds of gay and varied plumage, who made the air melodious by their charming songs.

In the smoking-room piles of soft, luxurious cushions invited repose.

It was upon the divans formed by these pillows that Sir Lawrence indulged in his favourite vice. He had brought with him from Naples a man whose acquaintance he had made in that city of the Sybarites. He was called the Count de Cannes, and known as the most prodigious opium-smoker in Europe. He would intoxicate himself with the deleterious drug to such an extent, that his trances lasted whole days together. His face was attenuated, and dark rings round his eyes informed the beholder that there was something radically and constitutionally wrong with the man.

One thing alone prevented Count de Cannes from falling a victim to his opium proclivities, and that was, he did not smoke regularly; he had his periodical fits, during which he felt that he must indulge his appetite or die. Several weeks would elapse between each of his orgies, and during that time the enervated body had time to partially exhale the poison it had imbibed. There was no question that opium, taken in the large doses the count addicted himself to, must sooner or later kill him.

It was merely a question of time.

The count was a man of some property, although no one exactly knew in what quarter of the globe his estates were situated.

He was always reticent when his family affairs were under discussion.

The reason that people said he was rich and accredited him with the possession of money, was that he never seemed to be in want of the sinews of war. Sir Lawrence was delighted to meet with him, and cultivated his society so assiduously that at last an acquaintance was struck up, which soon cemented itself into a friendship. The count talked English as well as he did French, and if the truth must be told, he was infinitely more English in his appearance than French. There was a bold expression about his well-defined features, which were not devoid of beauty. He was a perfect gentleman in his manner and conversation. At times, when he thought no one was looking at him, he would pass his hand across his brow and sigh so profoundly that his heart seemed on the point of breaking; when his hand was withdrawn, his features were convulsed with extreme mental anguish.

Like Mimi Zedfern, the count was a man with whose life some mystery was connected.

Sir Lawrence Allingford took the count to his house, and invited him to stay some little time with him. The invitation was cheerfully accepted. The day after their arrival in town breakfast was hurried over, and with an eagerness that showed how strong a conquest the drug had obtained over them, they hastened to the smoking-room. The count's servant had arranged the pipes for them, and, after throwing themselves upon the mass of yielding cushions, they began to smoke. Some time had to elapse before the vapour affected them, and they filled up the interval by talking to one another.

"Why do you smoke?" asked Sir Lawrence of the count.

"Because I am unhappy, my friend," returned De Cannes; "and you?"

"That was my reason, in the first instance; but I do it now because I like it."

"Excuse me, that is not your real reason."

"What then? Why do I do it?"

"Because you cannot help it," replied De Cannes, phlegmatically.

There was all the truth in the world in this reply;

both the men were wedded to the habit, and nothing but death could ever divorce them from it—that death which they were courting by their rashness and vicious folly.

"I differ with you there," said Sir Lawrence, "I flatter myself that I possess sufficient strength of mind to break myself of the habit if I chose to exert it; but the dreams I have are so enchanting, and the visions they produce so raving, that I should deprive myself of one of the chief attractions of life."

"Are they not dearly purchased at the expense of the reaction?"

Sir Lawrence shuddered at the thought of it.

The long Oriental pipes richly ornamented with silver curiously cut and chased, emitted the fragrant smoke, which eddied about, until it ascended to the ceiling, where it formed a floating canopy.

"Everything is followed by a reaction," said the baronet.

"I grant you the truth of that remark, but there is such a thing as a pleasurable reaction, which is altogether opposed to that which is the result of undue excitement brought about by a dangerous stimulant. We will say that you have been presented with a piece of plate by your gratified tenant. Bands of music salute you as a conquering hero, and you are pleased with the flattering incense that assails you at every step. You go home, sit in your library in a state of comparative quiet; the reaction sets in, but you look at your piece of plate—probably silver, more probably tawar—and are at once consoled. Some time afterwards you dine with a three-bottle man, who locks the door and throws the key out of the window. Upon compulsion you drink your three bottles—what is the consequence? You are found by sympathizing footmen under the table at a late hour next morning. You have a racking headache, which all the recollection of the delicious wine you have drunk cannot assuage. An empty bottle makes you shudder, and a glass of wine would be little better than poison to you."

"I believe I could leave off smoking opium, though," remarked the baronet.

"I do not believe it," replied De Cannes. "I have known many men who thought the same thing. They failed, one and all—signally failed in the attempt. Resolution and execution are two different things. I have often gone to bed with the determination of laying the first stone of an edifice which should make me famous. The next day my intention faded away before the sun of reality. I am a theorist; so are ninety-nine men in every hundred. We are governed by the hundredth—that is, by the practical man."

Sir Lawrence was not much of a philosopher, and the count's conversation appeared a little too lofty for his comprehension, in the lazy mood in which he was; so he said, by way of turning the dialogue into a new channel:

"Did I ever tell you that I think of marrying, shortly?"

"You have not made me the recipient of your confidence to that extent."

"Nevertheless, such is my intention. It is a long-standing engagement between the lady and myself. It was to have taken place some time ago, but an accident obliged us to postpone it."

"May I ask the name of the lady?"

"Brandon is the name. The earl, her brother, is well known in political circles."

"Brandon?" repeated Count de Cannes, striking his forehead, where have I heard that name before?"

He cast his eyes upon the ground and appeared plunged in deep thought. Sir Lawrence Allingford applied himself to the opium with indefatigable industry, which was in truth worthy of a better cause.

Presently his eyes closed, his lips parted, disclosing a row of teeth, which were very white. The pipe dropped from his hand and rolled on the floor, where it lay smoking. His head fell back upon the pillow, his hands hung listlessly by his side.

He was under the influence of opium. The trance was just beginning.

Count de Cannes was much more seasoned, and did not succumb so easily.

"Ha! I have it," he exclaimed, suddenly, and putting his hand in his pocket, he drew out a bundle of letters, from which he selected one. It was written in a pretty running hand. His eyes lighted on one paragraph. He read it slowly:

"This Lady Blanche Brandon is a riddle, which I find it difficult to solve. There is that about her which is mysterious. At times I find her plunged in a sea of melancholy. She is rarely, if ever, demonstrative. I am determined to probe her. She has piqued my curiosity, and you know when that is the case I possess the detective qualities of a ferret allied to the science of a Bow-street runner."

The letter was signed "Mimi."

(To be continued.)

CLOCKS.—A musical clock has been ordered by Mr. Guinness, for St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. The dials are of copper, and are each 8 feet in diameter, and the main wheels are each 18 inches in diameter. The hours will be struck on a bell weighing one ton and a half, and the tunes played on nine other bells, varying in weight from 5 cwt. to 25 cwt. The pendulum measures upwards of 15 feet in length, oscillates once in two seconds, and has a weight of "bob" at its end of upwards of 2 cwt. Its present repertoire consists of four tunes, which will be performed at intervals of three hours, day and night; that is to say, at three o'clock a.m., and at three o'clock p.m., the clock, having struck the hour, will play "Adeste Fidelis" twice, with an interval of one bar between the parts; at noon and midnight it will play the air "Martyrdom" twice, with two bars interval; at nine o'clock morning and evening, it will play the "Sicilian Mariner's Hymn"; and at six a.m. and six p.m., "Rousseau's Dream," both airs, as in the former instances, being repeated.

SCIENCE.

In the evidence in regard to a bridge case a few days since, an engineer testified that a measured march of men was the severest test of a bridge, and that the trotting of a horse produced double the vibrations of a twelve or fourteen-ton locomotive.

ARTIFICIAL DIAMONDS.—A correspondent, in reference to our remarks on this subject, suggests that even from carbon mixed with other matter, and thus dissolved, perhaps diamonds could be formed by galvanism or electro-deposit. As we have thrown out the suggestion as to the formation of diamonds, he thinks, the consideration of the subject may lead to some results.

A NEW COMPASS.—Mr. L. G. Vassallo, late of the Austrian navy, has made an improved form of compass. The improvement consists in having engraved upon the glass-cover of the ordinary compass a universal sundial—i.e., the hours of apparent time are engraved upon the compass-cover. The arm of the sundial is erected from the centre of the compass-cover, and is so hinged at this point as to be moveable at its upper extremity. This arm moves along a graduated arc, thus indicating the latitude. Now, by means of apparent time and latitude, the true meridian can be determined, and this will indicate upon the magnetic card the combined variation and deviation of the compass for the course at the time of observation.

MOISTURE IN THE AIR.—One of the most curious and interesting of the recent discoveries of science is, that it is to the presence of a very small proportion of a watery vapour in our atmosphere—less than one-half of one percent—that much of the beneficent effect of heat is due. The rays of heat sent forth from the earth after it has been warmed by the sun, would soon be lost in space, but for the wonderful absorbent properties of these molecules of aqueous vapour, which act with many thousand times the power of the atoms of the oxygen and nitrogen of which the air is composed. By this means the heat, instead of being transmitted into infinitesimal space as produced, is stopped or dammed up, or held back on its rapid course, to furnish the necessary conditions of life and growth. Let this moisture be taken from the air but for a single summer night, and the sun would rise next morning upon a "world held fast in the iron grip of frost."

DISCOVERY OF ANCIENT BRICK-KILNS IN FRANCE.—At the last sitting of the Academy of Sciences, a paper was received from M. Vionnois, describing six brick-kilns of the Gallo-Roman period discovered at La Roche-du-Thay, in the department of Ille-et-Vilaine. The fragments of tiles lying about sufficiently prove their origin, their shape being Gallo-Roman, and some of them even bearing the trademark of the brickmaker, which, however, it has been impossible to decipher. The tiles are flat, 40 centimetres in breadth and 2 in thickness, with lateral rims. The kilns are all alike, and one of them is still in good preservation. It is rectangular, 2.08 metres long by 1.70 in breadth. Its walls are vertical. The fireplace is 10 centimetres deeper than the kiln itself, and separated from it by a floor resting on three supports, and pierced with holes through which the flame penetrated between the tiles placed vertically in rows. The holes near the perimeter are wider below than above, while the contrary is the case with those near the centre. From all this it appears that bricks used to be burnt in kilns similar to those now used for earthenware.

HOW PHOTOGRAPHS ARE TAKEN.—A clean plate of glass is covered with collodion, and immersed for two or three minutes in a solution of nitrate of silver, for the purpose of making it sensitive to light. After draining, it is placed in the camera, and the image of

the object to be delineated is thrown upon it by the lens for a period varying from five to forty seconds, according to the intensity of the light. A solution of protosulphate of iron and acetic acid is then thrown over the plate, when the picture begins to make its appearance; after it is fully brought out the plate is washed, and a second solution of pyrogallol acid and citric acid, to which a few drops of the nitrate of silver bath are added, is poured over the plate and waved gently backwards and forwards for a minute or so, to increase the intensity of the picture. When sufficiently intense it is again washed and immersed in a solution of hyposulphite of soda, this dissolves the whitish-looking substance called iodide of silver, with which the plate up to this time has been obscured; when done, wash thoroughly, dry, and varnish. This is the negative. From the time of immersion in the nitrate of silver bath up to the washing off the pyrogallol solution the sensitive plate must be carefully kept from daylight, the room in which the operations are performed should be lighted only by a pane of deep orange glass. The solutions are made as follows:—1. Pure nitrate of silver, 2 oz.; distilled water, 29 oz.; iodide of potassium, 1 gr.; nitric acid, 2 drops; filter. 2. Protosulphate of iron, 15 grs.; glacial acetic acid, 15 minims; water, 1 oz.; add a little alcohol to make it flow freely. 3. Pyrogallol acid, 2 grs.; citric acid, 2 grs.; water 1 oz. At the time of using this add 5 or 10 drops of bath solution to it. 4. Hyposulphite of soda, 2 oz.; water, 8 oz. Collodion is best purchased ready-made of a photographic chemist. There is no secret in this, the royal road to success in photography is care and cleanliness with the different solutions, which should be kept apart.

DRIVING BEES AND PREVENTING THEIR SWARMING.

BEING on a visit to a lady on the 18th of May, I found she had a stock of bees in an old common bell-shaped straw hive. They were very strong, and hanging out in large numbers. She did not want any swarms, but wished the bees put into one of my improved bar-frame hives.

About the middle of the day, when large numbers of the bees were out collecting food, having placed an empty straw hive, bottom upwards, in a bucket, I lifted the stock upon it, and placed the bar-frame hive on the floor-board from which we had removed the stock. I removed the cluster of bees and placed them upon the floor-board, and then tied a cloth round where the two hives joined, and having carried them a few yards to a chair, I turned the stock-hive to the bottom and placed it upon my knees. We beat the hive at the bottom for about five minutes until we heard the bees had gone up.

The stock-hive being placed in the bucket, I untied the cloth and found the bees had all gone up into the empty hive except about a score. I then carried the bees to the bar-frame hive, and having removed the cover, I struck the straw hive a smart blow or two, when the bees all fell out upon the bars, and soon ran down between, and I replaced the cover.

We then proceeded to cut out the combs, and found them filled with brood and eggs in all stages of development. We fastened them into my improved bar-frames, and found my wedge-shaped frames a very great improvement in fastening the combs. When we had done half of the combs we put them into the hive, and then cut the remainder out and placed them in the frames, and these into the bar frame hive.

When I cut the last comb out, I found the queen surrounded by the score of bees that were left in the stock-hive. I caught her and placed her on the alighting-board, and she soon ran into the box. This shows that great care should be used in cutting out the combs, lest the queen be left, and so get injured. In this case the bees had all gone up into the empty hive except about a score and the queen; but she generally is nearly the first to go up.

I removed the royal cells and part of the drone brood, and the next day we placed a large bar-frame super on the stock, when they soon commenced to work; and the probability is that no swarm will issue from it this year, and my friend will be able to take nearly four times the quantity of honey from them that she would have done had she allowed them to swarm, besides getting rid of an old straw hive.—*Wm. Carr.*

MR. L'ANSON'S STUD.—Mr. Joseph Dawson offered Mr. Wm. L'Anson the sum of £25,000 for the whole of his racing stud, which was declined.

A PUNCTUAL man is very rarely a poor man, and never a man of doubtful credit. His small accounts are frequently settled, and he never meets with difficulty in raising money to pay large demands. Small debts neglected ruin credit, and when a man has lost that, he will find himself at the bottom of a hill he cannot ascend.



[DEATH AT THE TOWERS.]

MRS. LARKALL'S BOARDING SCHOOL.

By the Author of "Man and His Idol."

CHAPTER LXV.

DEATH AT THE TOWERS.

"You must begone," said Death, "these walks are mine." Love wept, and spread her shoeny wings for flight.

Tennyson.

THE news of Roland Hershaw's secret return to England acted like oil on flame upon the infatuated Mahala.

She was no longer a rational being.

The idea of seeing the man for whom she entertained a mad passion, such as the daughters of warmer climates are alone capable of, seemed to madden her. And the mania thus inspired was anything but harmless. "Now or never," thought the Indian, "is the opportunity for me. If I seize it, I may make Roland mine; if I lose it, he is lost to me for ever."

Mahala was, it will have been seen, inspired by two of the most dangerous passions. One was, a hopeless love, of tropical intensity; the other, an insatiable avarice. Roland Hershaw was the central object of both infatuations. He was handsome, loveable, and rich. If Mahala could win him as a husband, any sacrifice must be worthily made, since, as his wife, she must become a lady in position, if not in birth.

The infatuation of the poor, benighted Indian was amusing, but it was genuine. No human being could suppose it possible for Roland Hershaw to think of her as his wife. Yet it seemed highly probable to her. Why was this? Simply because, as I have already shown, no human being regards himself as contemptible—self-esteem being among the laws of self-preservation—and also because human vanity is without bounds.

Had Mahala simply entertained these mistaken views, and it had been left to the due course of events to give her the rebuffs she merited, little harm would have come of it. But, unhappily, this ridiculous vanity became a fatal principle of action with her.

You have heard what she promised herself on the night when she first came to the Towers.

"He will cast Gertrude from him with loathing," she had said; "and as for this child—this Amy—she is in my power. And when both are gone from his path—"

The sentence was not finished—did not need finishing: it was significant enough. And now the moment

which was to illustrate its fatal meaning drew near. Roland was coming back, and it was necessary that her path should be clear. There was no time to lose.

Amy Robert, as we know, was broken in spirit and enfeebled in health.

When her wish to have Mahala with her was first gratified, a decided improvement in her was perceptible; but the effect had gone off. Temporary excitement had resulted, as usual, in increased debility.

Heaven only knows how the perfidious ayah had helped to produce these distressing effects. She was jealous of her power over Amy, and tyrannical in her use of it. Lady Agatha would often experience a pang of jealousy as she found her beloved child ever ready to escape from her society to that of the Indian, who at last, conscious of the influence she had gained over her charge, was almost insolent in asserting it.

On the very night on which Dr. Amphlett brought the welcome news of Hershaw's expected return, Mahala resolved to turn this influence to deadly account.

"He shall never see her again alive," was her determination, as she ascended to the chamber in which Amy, who of late was always tired and languid, had already retired to rest.

Moving with her habitual noiseless tread, Mahala reached the bed-side, and sat down. Presently Amy raised her eyelids, and slowly gazed round the chamber, only lit by a small paraffin lamp, until her eyes rested on Mahala. Then she could not restrain a slight shudder. The Indian always inspired that indescribable feeling of dread.

"Something has happened?" Amy said, after a few moments, observing a peculiar expression on the face of her attendant.

"Nothing particular, missie," replied the ayah, in a tone which belied her words.

"You alarm me," cried Amy, her heart beating violently with the effects of sudden terror; "pray, pray do not conceal anything from me!"

"I will not," said Mahala, "if you think you have strength to bear it."

"Oh, yes—anything."

Fragile as a summer flower, her flushed cheek and twitching lips formed a significant commentary on her words.

"Listen, then," said Mahala, watching intently the effect of what she was saying; "Edward told you that Roland Hershaw was married to Gertrude Norman. You recollect?"

"Recollect?"

"Yes, yes. I know what effect it had and still has upon you, and I blame myself more than I can tell

you for not inquiring into the matter then, and ascertaining the truth for you."

"He did not marry her?" then asked Amy, eagerly.

"You are right—he did not."

"But why should Edward deceive me?"

"He deceived himself."

"Ah, he believed that what he said was true? Well, well? Tell me more. You have news of Roland? I know you have. He is coming back?"

"He may be," said the ayah, "but he will never dare to show his face here again. His falsehood has been discovered. Sir Sydney knows the hollow pretext on which he evaded his engagement to you, and cheated Gertrude out of her fortune."

Amy heard, and the colour died out of her cheek. Her breathing was thick and hard.

"He *did* love me, Mahala!" she faltered, at length.

"No. He never loved but one human being," was the answer.

"And that was?"

"Himself."

"Oh, Mahala! You wrong him—indeed, you wrong him. I will never question his love for me," said Amy.

"Any more than Gertrude did his marriage with her, till it turned out all a delusion."

"Spare me, Mahala! spare me!" implored the sick girl. "Let me cherish the hope that he still loves me. Let me think that the wrong he has done Gertrude has been out of consideration for my happiness. It may be wrong; but let me think that I am right. I have no stay or comfort in my life, but in that thought."

A dark cloud rested on the ayah's brow.

"Deceive yourself if you must," she said, bitterly, "but I don't envy you your faith in the love of a man who makes a pretended marriage with your friend a pretext for discarding you."

With these bitter words, she quitted the room.

But she had duly calculated the effect her communication would have on the fragile girl. Like the prisoner of Chillon, who had "learned to love despair!" so Amy Robert had resigned herself to the idea of Roland's marriage, consoling her heart with the idea that, however much circumstances had been against their union, he truly loved her.

Mahala had disturbed this equanimity of feeling.

Her communication had awakened new hopes, and given birth to fresh fears. These racked her mind and drove sleep from her eyes. All night she lay tossing from side to side, and the morning found her

wan and feeble, and with a hectic spot burning in either cheek. As the day went on this intensified, and it was a significant fact that about five o'clock in the evening a celebrated physician's carriage drove up the winding paths leading to the principal entrance of the house.

The physician remained about half-an-hour.

When he left, Lady Agatha herself saw him to the door, and inquired, with the utmost anxiety, his opinion of her favourite daughter.

"Well," said the placid physician—one of those who regard typhus fever and tooth-ache with equal indifference—"she is weak, but may rally. Should suppose that she is perturbed in mind—some affair of the affections, eh? Ah! Thought so. Well, we must do what we can to soothe and strengthen. By the way, it is not easy to account for the utter prostration. She has not taken anything?"

"Taken anything?" echoed her ladyship.

"Anything deleterious, you know? Anything in the way of a—drug?"

"You mean—poison?" said Lady Agatha with horror.

"Well, well; don't alarm yourself; but persons in a melancholy, morbid state of mind have had recourse to such things as a means of relief—purely as a means of relief, of course, before now."

"In this case," said Lady Agatha, "such a thing is out of the question."

"Ah, I daresay. I daresay," returned the eminent physician. "It's as well to mention these things, you know."

With this, he entered his carriage and drove off.

As he went, the dark form of Mahala rose from the shadows thrown by mingled honeysuckle, clematis and passion-flower about the porch, and there was a wicked gleam in her black eyes.

"He suspects. He shall see her no more," she said.

From that day Amy Robert grew worse. They said that distress of mind was overpowering her weak body, and it might have been so. Mahala encouraged the idea, and should have known best, for she was always with her charge—scarcely left her, night or day, and was, Amy confessed, her only comfort.

That the comfort administered by the ayah, was not of the most wholesome description, was very clear. It consisted, almost entirely, of secret conversations about Roland Hershaw, whom she extolled and deprecated by turn, the chief burden of her tale being that he had grossly deceived and betrayed poor Amy, for whom he had ceased to feign any affection, even before he found the pretext in his pretended marriage for abandoning her.

Dr. Amphlett could have refuted all this; but the ayah was aware that he could do so, and therefore set her patient against seeing him, declaring that he had already played her false, and had been Roland's chief agent in his designs upon Gertrude.

It is sad to watch the rapid decay of a young and lovely being, formed to delight all eyes, and to be the sunshine of a peaceful home. As one regrets the flower blighted in its opening prime, so does the heart bleed at the contemplation of a human blossom, not less pure and beautiful, withering upon its stem. Painfully rapid was the fading away of Amy Robert. A few days, even a few hours, seemed to have the effect of years upon her. Before the household had well come to regard her as an invalid, the whisper went from lip to lip that her danger was imminent—that she was dying.

Her friends were sent for, among the rest Edward Bruce, who was horrified by the intelligence that Amy Robert was on the verge of the grave.

Of course he hastened to the Towers, arriving there more like a maniac than a sane being.

Prudence would have suggested his keeping away. But who thinks of prudence in such a moment? Certainly a young, ardent, impassioned lover is not very likely to do so. Doctors, it is said, are more often fatal than diseases. But friends have more to answer for than either. In moments of extreme mental and bodily prostration, what nature chafely demands is—peace. And it is just at that crisis that a whole circle of weeping relatives, backed by a small army of lugubrious friends, insist on paying their last respects,—often the last because their indiscreet affection overwhelms the sufferer and puts it out of his power to recover.

But Edward Bruce did not give a thought to this.

It would have been strange had he done so.

He only felt that Amy was dying, and that, should she pass away without a word to soothe and comfort him in after years, it would be a source of eternal regret.

When he at last reached the Towers, his ardour received a terrible shock. The physicians—for, in spite of Mahala, three had that day been called in—had forbidden the patient to be disturbed. Even without that injunction, Sir Sydney and Lady Agatha would naturally have desired to spare their child the trial of

an interview which must, from the relative positions of Amy and Edward, be severely trying. On this point they were firm. Greatly as they loved and pitied the young man, they listened to his pleading in vain. He prayed, entreated, adjured them to grant him but a moment's sight of Amy—to let him hear but one word from her lips. But they were obdurate.

At length, what his pleading could not obtain, was spontaneously offered: Amy had expressed a strong wish to see him, and her wish was law.

It was a sultry summer night.

The large moon, whitening as it stole upward from the dank atmosphere, suffused the landscape in its softened radiance.

Amy's room was on the ground floor, and the French windows opened on to a stone balcony, about which and even round the window itself, roses had been trained, and blossomed in luxurious profusion.

As Edward Bruce stole on tip-toe into the sick-chamber, he gave one glance toward the trellised window—taking in the stone balcony, and beyond it, the grounds that seemed to be melting away into the misty moonlight—and then hurrying to the couch on which Amy reclined, he fell on his knees and buried his face in the clothes.

The girl's white, transparent hand stretched toward his head and rested on the curling locks, which no art could bring into smoothness and order.

Then the youth seized that hand, and reverently impressed a kiss upon it.

"Edward," said Amy, in so low a whisper that it startled him, there was so little life in it, "I wanted to see you, to tell you—to tell you—"

The whisper died away into silence. Even that effort had been too much for Amy's weakness.

"Yes, darling," Edward said, when she appeared to have recovered.

"To tell you," she went on, "that I am dying."

"No, Amy, not dying—not dying!" cried the impatient boy.

"I cannot live, Edward," she said, decisively; "I know that now quite well. My strength is going fast—so fast! But I couldn't die till I had seen you, and told you all that it is in my heart to say. Edward, you have loved me very truly—far, far too truly for your own happiness, and I am grateful; indeed, indeed I am."

The thin hand clutched at Edward's fingers in an emphatic grasp.

He could not speak.

"But, Edward," she went on, "though I have felt toward you like a sister, I could not feel toward you as you desired. I have tried. I have prayed to love you as I love—you must forgive me if I say, as I love him. But I could not. It was not in my heart, and would not come there. It was very, very wicked of me, I know, not to feel as I ought to have felt; but I couldn't do it, Edward; I couldn't do it. And yet I did appreciate all your good and noble qualities so much, ay, so much more than I did his. And I was, and I am so grateful to you for all your love and kindness; and I felt that I must tell you this—and—"

She broke off in sobs.

It was a moment of inexpressible pain to both.

What could Edward Bruce say? What words of comfort could he offer to Amy in her dying hour?

"Amy," he said, at length, in a voice choked with tears, "these words are very precious to me, because I know the feeling that has prompted them. But they were unnecessary. My heart had already helped me to interpret yours. When I saw how you loved him, I knew that there was no place in your breast for any second love. I knew it and did not blame you. As for him—"

There was an involuntary change in the voice. Amy noticed it, and a quivering touch of the hand warned Edward of the pain he inflicted.

"Well, well," he said, "I will not speak ill of him."

"Not ill. No, Edward, you must not speak ill of him. Whatever his faults and his misfortunes, he has been ever good and kind and generous to me. It is not my love for him makes me say this—it is the truth. And, Edward, dear, as my oldest and best friend, I want you to believe this—you, above all others."

"And why, Amy?" he asked, in surprise.

"Because, when I am gone, they will all speak ill of him. They will call him an adventurer, and a villain, and I know not what dreadful names. And then there will be no one to speak up for him, and to say how brave he was—how clever, how generous, how chivalric in his nature. And I want you, when I am dead, to take my place, to stand up for him in my name, and say, 'Poor Amy knew him better than all the world beside, and she never doubted or blamed him, but loved him to the last!' Will you do this for me, Edward?"

Again, what could the lad answer?

In his heart there burned a fierce hatred and detestation of this man. Ever since his interview with

Carla he had chafed and fretted against the promise he had given her, that he would use all his exertions to avert the just penalty of his crimes. And now, here was the idol of his heart urging, as her dying wish, that he would uphold the miscreant as a model of chivalric honour and devotion!

"But, Amy—" he ventured to say.

Her large, tearful eyes turned on him with such a half-sorrowful, half-reproachful look that he fairly broke down. He could not pain her with another word of remonstrance.

"You will not do it?" she sighed.

"Yes—yes; I promise!"

"Thank you, Edward. Oh, I do thank you for this, because it is so kind, and I shall die in peace, knowing that he will have some one to speak for him, and that you will be friends. And now, dear, there is one other thing I want to ask you, and then I shall be happy. Some day you will see Roland. He is coming back, and you will meet, and then I want you to tell him that you were with Amy when she died, and that her heart beat its last in perfect faith in his love—that she discredited all his slanderers, forgave him all his faults, and that could she have died in his arms, she would have passed away in perfect bliss. You will tell him this?"

"I will."

"Thank you, Edward, and—and God bless you!"

With these words she sank back calmly upon her pillow.

The momentary fire which excitement had kindled died out of her eyes. The hectic spot pale in her cheek. The right hand which still rested on Edward's head was inert as a dead hand.

Profound silence reigned in the chamber, broken only by the sobs of the young man, who buried his face in the counterpane, heart-sick and weary of his life.

Kneeling there, he was conscious of the gusts of summer air that stole in, burdened with fragrance, and without the aid of his eyes his brain seemed to retain the picture of the open window, the rose-entwined, stone balcony, and the misty, leafy scenery beyond.

But he had no means of perceiving what was happening in that moonlit scene upon which the window looked.

He did not see that a horseman entered the grounds, and, avoiding the broad carriage-drive, dashed across the smooth turf, careless of the stunted shrubs and half-concealed stumps which might, at any moment, bring the animal upon its knees.

He was not conscious that the horseman made direct for the window of the sick-room, as if with some previous knowledge of where it was situated, and dismounting adroitly, yet quietly, tethered his horse to a rose-bush, and making at once for the window, proceeded to clamber up the balcony.

What startled Edward Bruce was the sudden rustling of the trellised roses, followed by a footstep in the chamber. Then he sprang to his feet, but before he had time to interpose the stranger was at the bedside, and Amy, as if inspired with supernatural life and strength, had uttered a feeble cry of surprise, had sprung up and thrown her arms about the intruder's neck.

"Roland!" she had exclaimed.

And that was the last word she ever uttered upon earth.

The abrupt appearance of her lover had proved too much for her delicate and overwrought frame, and after a faint gasp she realized the dearest wish of her heart by dying in his arms.

We will drop the curtain over the harrowing scene which followed when Roland, for once moved, for once melted into the semblance of humanity, bent horror-stricken over the corpse he clasped to his bosom; when Edward Bruce, white with anger, yet found himself curbed by the last wishes of Amy, and when Sir Sydney and Lady Agatha, entering attended by Mahala, were struck dumb with horror at the picture presented to their gaze.

CHAPTER XLVI

MAHALA'S DREAM OF LOVE.

All night I lay in agony.

In anguish dark and deep;

My fevered eyes I dared not close,

But stared aghast at sleep.

Thomas Hood.

THE presence of Roland Hershaw at the Towers may be accounted for in a few words.

By one of those lucky chances which were always attending this man, and which he was accustomed impudently to ascribe to some protecting power watching over the wicked, he contrived to give his pursuers the slip after that memorable journey into Russia. Without a moment's delay he completely altered his course. Abandoning all his plans, seeing that they might be as familiar to his enemies as to himself, he

out across the country by the least frequented routes, and so, in an incredibly short time, found himself in England.

The only man to whom he had communicated this design was Dr. Amplett, who, from the peculiar and retired nature of his house, might, he fancied, be able to give him a safe asylum. His letter was written and posted with extreme caution; but not with sufficient for it to escape the agents of the Society, who, as we know, at once placed themselves in communication with Roderick Bruce, calling on him to anticipate the arrival of the fugitive by such steps as he might deem necessary.

Unconscious of this, the victim pursued his way, inwardly chuckling at the idea that once more, he had baffled those who were thirsting for his life, whereas in truth, his cleverness was only inducing them to have recourse to extra and more stringent measures.

On arriving at the doctor's, Roland's first inquiry was as to the health of Amy Robert, and on his learning that her state was critical and her life despaired of, he refused to pass an hour in his chosen place of sanctuary; but set off at once on the best hack he could procure, and hardly drew rein till he had reached the Towers.

There, he had been warned, difficulties awaited him.

His proceedings had not been of a nature to commend him to the favour of Sir Sydney and his lady, and it was pretty certain that if he applied for admission it would be denied him. At all events, there was not the slightest chance of his finding his way to the sick chamber.

His resolution therefore was speedily taken, and what he proposed to himself, we have seen, he succeeded in accomplishing.

Nothing but a genuine and almost idolatrous love for Amy Robert could have induced him to take a step at once so daring and indiscreet. But we have already commented on this anomalous passion—this grain of gold in a mine of refuse—this "one virtue," which redeemed, so far as anything could redeem, the man of a "thousand crimes."

One of the inevitable consequences of his act was a stormy interview in the library of the Towers—almost within hearing of the chamber of the dead—in the course of which Sir Sydney boldly accused Roland as the murderer of his child, and ordered him from the house.

To Roland's astonishment Edward Bruce, who was present, came to his rescue, and it was difficult to say whether the baronet or his unwelcome guest listened with most surprise to the words which fell from the youth's lips. Knowing his passion for Amy, both had expected to hear him overwhelm Roland with reproaches for his conduct from first to last.

But then they had not heard the promise Edward had given to Carla; nor listened to the last wishes of the dead.

In a voice, firm but for the emotion which sometimes choked it, the young man urged on the baronet the love which Roland had from the first felt for Amy, as well as inspired in her. He showed that the man, might have had difficulties to contend with of which they knew nothing, and had been pursued by enemies whose presence was unsuspected by others. He confessed himself unable to account for, or to approve of all his proceedings; but he fully acquitted him on the ground of his abrupt entrance into the sick chamber, though it had proved fatal to Amy, seeing that it was the only means left him of ever seeing or exchanging a word with the dying girl in this world.

The agony which it cost Edward Bruce to utter these words, he alone could tell. That they utterly failed in their effect, and that in spite of them the baronet ordered the intruder to quit the Towers did not surprise him. But the sense of a duty performed, and a promise kept, was his reward, and it was very precious to him.

As he quitted the house of mourning, Roland encountered the young man, and could not resist the impulse to hold out his hand to him.

Edward Bruce refused to take it.

"What!" said Roland, "you will not?"

"No!"

"Excuse me," said Roland, with his ready sneer, "but are you mad? Is this sort of thing the 'ecstasy of grief' one reads of? One moment you go out of your way to advocate a man's cause, the next you refuse his hand?"

"My conduct is strange to you no doubt," returned Edward coldly; "but it may be accounted for on other grounds than those you, so kindly suggest. Unfortunately for herself and for all of us, Mr. Henshaw, Amy Robert had an infatuation—no, in simple terms she loved you."

"I know it. And what then?"

"Why this, that with her last breath she charged me with the sacred duty of telling you this. She gave me a further charge, with which I need not trouble you. Enough that I have already acted upon it."

"Oh, then it was to her wish that we were indebted for that charming specimen of oratory with which you just favoured us?" sneered the other.

"It was not her wish," said Edward, parrying the remark, "that I should extend to you the hand of friendship."

And he would have passed on.

But Roland had no mind to be thus thrust aside.

"Stay, sir," he said, "let there be no mistake as to the footing on which we part. Is it that of friends or enemies?"

"You shall judge for yourself," replied Edward, in a low but emphatic tone.

"I shall judge?"

"Yes. You have enemies."

Roland started.

"Well, go on," he said.

"They are powerful and insidious."

"Well?"

"You have come here to escape their machinations: you have, in fact, only run your feet into the net."

"You know this?"

"I do."

"How?"

"No matter. I do know it. At this moment I have it in my power to betray you into the hands of those who seek your blood, and whose readiness to shed it you well know. I could do this; but I will not."

"No?"

"I swear it by the memory of my dead love!" cried Edward, his eyes filling with tears as he spoke.

"Is it by her wish that you act in this matter also?" asked Roland with surprise.

"No," was Edward's reply.

"Indeed! Yet you still refuse me your hand?"

"I still refuse it."

"You have this dangerous knowledge—almost as dangerous to you possessing it as to me—yet you determine that we shall part enemies?"

"If what I have done places me in that position in your opinion—yes."

"Why, as to my opinion on the matter," sneered Roland, "that is neither here nor there. You refuse me your hand—is that a sign of friendship?"

Edward shrugged his shoulders.

"You know it is not. It means that we part as enemies. Take care then, sir; no man ever willingly put himself in the position of being Roland Henshaw's enemy who did not live to regret it."

Edward Bruce bowed, and hurried away with as little appearance of hurry as he could command.

The part he had played was a very hard one. At that moment, when his heart was bleeding for poor Amy, it was no light trial of his patience to have to restrain the feelings which prompted him to crush the being who had destroyed her, and he questioned how long he might be able to put the curb on his impetuous feelings.

On his part, Roland regarded the young man with a savagely vindictive feeling. The contempt implied in his refusal to give his hand cut him to the quick, and he determined that at the very earliest opportunity he would retaliate upon him for it.

It was in this state of mind that, on reaching the spot on which he had left his horse, beside the rose-tree, he encountered Mahala.

The face of the ayah was radiant with happiness. Her eyes glittered; her teeth bore their brightest polish, and even her skin glistened as if it had been lubricated with oil.

"Oh, Master Roland!" she cried, clasping her hands ecstatically.

"You here?" was his cold response.

"Yes, yes," she replied, hurt, but determined not to show it; "ah, sir, poor Missy Amy gone! And Missy Gertrude is gone, too. What'll I do now? What'll I do?"

"How the deuce should I know?" demanded Roland, impatiently.

"You are not angry?" asked Mahala, in an altered voice, "you cannot be angry with poor Mahala. You must remember that night, when you petted me, and fuddled me, and put the ring on my finger, and asked me to wear it for your sake. I have done so, Master Roland, whenever I dared, and see it is here; it glitters in the light of your eyes."

She held up the diamond ring as she spoke.

Roland looked at her a moment as if uncertain as to her meaning. Then he snatched the ring from her fingers.

"Are you a raving idiot?" he said. "Do you imagine for one moment that you have any claim on me? That there is anything between us beyond services performed and paid for?"

"Oh, Master Roland! Not that way—don't speak to me that way!" pleaded the ayah; "don't say there is nothing between us! Nothing! Oh, yes, yes! a little, a very little of feeling—of love—"

"Love!" he burst out, catching up the word and stifling it in laughter. "Why, you ugly Hottentot Venus, what imp of vanity ever moved you to dream

of such monstrosity? I love you? I have any feeling towards you but pity? You must be mad—mad as a March hare! There, off with you—out of my way! Out of the way, I say—"

"The ring? Give me the ring," cried Mahala, clinging about his feet.

"Take it!" cried Roland, fiercely snapping it in two and dashing it upon the ground, "and now—get out!"

He raised his horsewhip, as if about to bring it down upon her shoulders—then sprang upon the restless animal that had well-nigh torn the rose-tree from its roots, and plunged off into the night.

Long, long after he was gone, Mahala still crouched in the dank grass where he had left her, utterly prostrated. But her eyes glowed with a light that seemed kindling with momentarily increasing intensity, her bosom heaved spasmodically, and at length she started up, erect as a dart.

Then dashing one clenched hand upon her dark breast, she shrieked out:

"I will have revenge!"

"It is in your own hands, woman," said a voice at her elbow.

She turned, with a shudder, and confronted the speaker.

CHAPTER XLVII

CAUGHT AT LAST.

See how the trodden worm will turn, and how
The most despised and loathsome thing becomes
An instrument of Fate.

ROLAND HENSHAW returned to Doctor Amplett's in the grey dawn of morning.

He was admitted by the living skeleton in the clothes of the dead giant, who acted as porter to the establishment, and was informed that the doctor was in the museum, and awaited him.

It will be readily understood that the young man was in no mood for conversation, his heart being torn by a variety of conflicting emotions; but Amplett was not to be put off.

If the truth must be told, he was sitting up in the mere hope that his guest might return that night, and, to that end, had lit up a meerschaum of enormous proportions, in the cheerful semblance of a death's-head with ruby eyes, and provided himself with plenty of coffee, which he made by means of a Russian samovar, and drank out of Turkish cups without handles.

On hearing the sound of voices in the ante-room, the doctor sallied out, pipe in hand.

"Come in, my friend, come in!" he said. "Delighted to see you back to-night! Eh! what's happened? Nothing serious, I hope!"

"Robert's daughter is dead," said Roland, curtly, following his host into the museum.

"Dead! You don't say so! Why, how did that happen?" returned the doctor.

"How does anything of that sort happen?" demanded Roland. "She was weak and fragile enough in all conscience!"

He said this in a tone of disparagement; pride dictated that tone. He would not have let a single being into participation with his sorrow; yet, at that very moment, he could have sat down and cried like a child.

It seemed to him that, even as he spoke, he could feel the unshed tears lying at his heart.

"She was weak," said Amplett, with a peculiar tone, as he pointed to a seat for his guest, and resumed his armchair and pipe; "but not so weak, nor so fragile either, as that comes to."

"You don't mean to say that there's been anything wrong?" asked Roland.

"I?—oh no! Nor do I mean to say that everything has been all right, for the matter of that, I don't know, and can't say."

"But who could have any interest in shortening Amy's life?" demanded Roland.

"Who, indeed?" exclaimed the doctor.

Roland started to his feet.

"You mean something," he said; "your sneers and hints are not all unfounded. Come, what is it?"

"I mean nothing, because I know nothing," was the response. "Sit down."

The guest obeyed, but it was with an ill grace. He was nervous and fidgety. He could not understand his companion, and he was obstinately bent on not explaining.

For a time they sat in silence, Roland as usual lighting a cigar of extravagant price, while the doctor puffed out rings and waves of smoke that threatened to obscure him altogether eventually.

At length the doctor said, abruptly:

"Well, now, let's to business."

"To bed, you mean," sneered his companion.

"No," said the doctor, "it's time that you and I should understand how we stand. I've been serving you, and you've been making use of me. I've run all

the risk and up to this time you've got all the money. That's a satisfactory state of things so far as you are concerned; but I have a fancy that it may be improved. I think it may. Now to begin with—where is the cheque for the thousand pounds which you were to draw in my favour?"

"Oh, that's safe enough," returned Roland suddenly.

"I daresay—but it might be safer," said the doctor.

"Might it?"

"Yes. It's in your cheque-book at present. I should prefer its being handed over to my banker. Suppose you write it at once?"

"And if I did, what would be the value of it?"

The doctor stared.

"The value of it?" he muttered.

"Yes. You don't suppose that I'm fool enough to keep my money in banks in my own name?"

"In any of your names, you mean."

"Well, in any of them, if you prefer it. I deposit my money in assumed names, and in foreign banks. It is easy enough for me to identify myself and to draw my own money out; but a cheque for a thousand pounds would be of no use to you. Unassisted you would never get the money."

"Assist me, then," said the doctor, naturally enough.

"So I will," replied Roland—"all in good time; but at present it's as much as I can do to assist myself. Remember, I am here a fugitive—a concealed man. Why, even my ride of to-night may cost me my life!"

"Very true; but you seem to forget that you throw on me the responsibility of concealing you, and of obeying your orders, while you think any time early enough for my reward."

Roland lit a fresh cigar; and did not even deign a reply.

"Perhaps, had he noticed the evil glance of the eyes which played like snakes under the doctor's shaggy brows, he would have displayed less indifference."

"Come," said Amplett, after a time, "let us compromise this matter. I'm ready enough to serve you and it isn't your money that I want. Still, the labourer is worthy of his hire, you know. Now, we've had a talk or two over that piece of parchment you once brought me."

Roland's face brightened.

"What of it?" he said.

"You have promised it to me in your letter—that's all."

"Have I? What do you want with it?"

"Why, it's useless to you, and it may remain so to me. But it's a curiosity, and as I collect, I should like to have it for that reason alone. If I can make anything more of it, I promise you a fair share of all it may realize."

"That's business-like and liberal," sneered Roland, "and there is only one obstacle in the way of my meeting your views. I've parted with the parchment."

"Parted with it!" cried the doctor, aghast.

"Yes," returned the other, doggedly.

"Where is it, then?" cried his interrogator.

"That's more than I can exactly say. It may be—"

"Where?"

"At the bottom of the Seine."

"The Thames of Paris?"

"Yes."

"You don't mean it? But where—where else may it be?"

"In the possession of my wife, as she pleases to designate herself; an old friend of yours—Gertrude Norman."

"She has that paper? And where in heaven's name is she?"

"The likeliest address I can give," said the other, "is one of his imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia's prisons; which one, I must leave to your sagacity to find out."

He rose, yawning.

"Come," he said, "that purple light through the shutter-cracks means morning. Show me some hole or corner in which I may crawl to sleep."

The doctor obeyed.

He was no longer reluctant to part with his guest. Little as Roland suspected it, the conversation of the last few moments had been the crisis of his life. Doctor Amplett had heard enough to enable him to make his arrangements, and he was eager to be alone, so that he might think, and plot, and manoeuvre before the coming day. It would be time enough then to worry his guest for further particulars.

With studied politeness he bowed Roland to a small bedroom, so constructed in a hollow between two walls, that the house might have been searched without its existence being discovered, and then, turning the key upon him, returned to his pipe and coffee.

"That decides all," he said, resuming his seat; "this fellow without the parchment is as worthless as a squashed turnip. Unfortunate! Just as I had discovered the counterpart too, and might have laid my

finger upon the fortune! Well, there's nothing for it, but to sacrifice this man. Give him up, and let Wolff seize Protheroe's fortune—all but the part indicated in this secret writing. That must be mine—mine—mine!"

It was broad daylight before the man had finished his cogitations, and when it pleased him he carefully put away his death's-head meerschaum in a case fitting it, and looking like the blackened skin of the skull. The china-cups, each worth several guineas, he also locked up in a velvet lined case. Then taking his hat and stick he sallied forth, apparently as fresh and vigorous as if he had spent the night in sleep.

The doctor was absent all that day.

It was late when he returned, and then found Roland in a room adjoining his bedroom, in which he had remained a prisoner, since waking, about noon—afraid to venture forth, yet chafing like a caged tiger at the intolerable confinement.

That night the conversation about the secret writing was resumed; and Roland warmed to the subject sufficiently to entrust the doctor with an outline of what we already know of his adventures at Paris, in Berlin and Vienna, down to the moment of his escape. Some facts he suppressed, particularly in regard to the nature of the Society, having a wholesome fear of it before his eyes. That which seemed to interest the doctor deeply, was the ride toward Moscow and the probable fate of Gertrude.

"Was it probable that she would be seized by the Society?" he asked.

"More likely by the government," was the reply.

"But on what ground?"

"On some political charge," was the reply, "she confessed to me having papers given her by one of the members of the Society, which she had overlooked delivering, and there is little doubt but they were of such a nature that, in the event of her treachery, she would soon find herself the inmate of a Russian prison."

"You don't know that to which she would be most likely to be taken?"

"I do not."

There was clearly no more to be got from Hershaw on that subject, and so it was suffered to drop.

On the following day Dr. Amplett was again absent for many hours.

Of his proceedings on these days the only record is preserved in a private diary, which he was accustomed to keep in cypher, and from which these passages may be translated:

"Tuesday.—Called at Mr. Walmesley Dyott's offices. Saw him. A long interview. Peter Wolff was sent for. The old difficulty—his identity as Arnold Roydon Protheroe's nephew. Agreement drawn up assigning me £2,000 on my succeeding in supplying that link. Dyott has, at my advice, communicated with the authorities in Bohemia, respecting his knowledge of Roland Hershaw's complicity in the death of Protheroe and his robbery of the property, advising a prosecution. *Mem.*—Did not tell them the fact that Joanna speaks as to the remains of the body. That must be paid for."

"Wednesday.—Saw Mahala. She was very wretched and very vindictive. She has evidently been tampered with by some of the members of the Secret Society, and is as eager to denounce Roland as she was once eager to serve him. The fool has offended her on some crotchet—about her colour, I fancy. Refused to give any intelligence: got all I could. Found that she is in possession of important facts respecting Wolff's identity. Shall have them as well as her amulet. Then to get the counterpart, and all is well. On reaching home received an important communication from an unknown hand. That proves that they are already on the scent."

The next morning Dr. Amplett breakfasted with Roland Hershaw.

The doctor's manner was singularly strange and excited; but Hershaw was too self-absorbed to notice it. A dull cloud of melancholy seemed to rest upon his mind—a foreboding of some impending doom.

Scarcely was the morning meal over, when the door of the apartment opened, and an individual entered, bowed and advanced.

His head was bald, his eyes were without eyelids, his mouth was large, loose, and toothless.

At a glance, Roland recognized Monsieur Lence.

That individual walked straight up to his victim, and placing one hand upon his shoulder, while, with the other, he pointed to half-a-dozen villainous looking wretches at the door, he said:

"Vladimir, Count Istird—I arrest you."

"On what charge?" faltered Roland.

"That of the murder of Arnold Roydon Protheroe."

"Nonsense! We are in England: that took place—"

"In Bohemia. Exactly. But in these matters nations are very obliging. The order is countersigned by the English as well as signed by our government."

"You would like to see the paper, perhaps?" said

Dr. Amplett, stepping forward and bowing with a malicious grin.

"I should like to know to whom I am indebted for this—favour?" cried Roland, with clenched teeth.

"To a variety of persons," replied the doctor. "It is invidious to mention names—but you may be familiar with that of Mahala."

"What! The ayah?"

"Mahala the ayah. Your description is perfectly accurate."

(To be continued.)

MADAME RACHEL.—Madame Rachel, the enameller, must be doing a thriving business, for many of the ladies of the drawing-room, even the more juvenile demoiselles, had evidently called in art to add to the charms of nature, and in some cases the colour has been laid on too thick. Even alabaster arms may be too white.

MOORISH LEGEND OF THE RAVENS.—The Moors tell a story about the ravens. I heard it from Sir John Drummond Hay, who enjoined me to make a little tale of it. The Moors think that the ravens when first they come out of the eggs are white, and they relate, in a comical manner, how horrified the paternal raven was when the young one crept out, and he perceived that it was white. "What is this?" cried the little raven's father, inspecting narrowly his own black plumage; not a white feather was to be seen, and yet the young one was white! He then looked at the mother, but not a white feather was visible about her either; so he requested an explanation from her. "I do not understand it," she said, "but in a little time doubtless the right ones will come forth!" "I will fly away from here," he cried, "away—away—away!" and he did fly away. The mother remained with the little one. The father was as angry as he could be, but after he had flown about for some time, he began to think: "Perhaps I have not seen aright; I will go back and look again!" and he went back; he found that the little white one had become gray. "So then it is not white?" he exclaimed; "but still it cannot be called black; neither its mother nor I are of this colour." And he flew away again. But once more he returned, and then the young one had turned black. "Only give time and the right will appear;" this is the moral, and the father stuck to it afterwards. Such is the story of the ravens.—In Spain. By Hans Christian Andersen.

MEMORY OF PAST MOMENTS.—With what a beautiful garment memory clothes the human heart! How cluster and clamber the vines of childish intimacies around the monster trunk of the tree of mind! How beams the light of other days upon the soul! We look back, from the shadowy present to the shining past, and review with pleasure eye, enthusiasm, the scenes of childhood that were so fraught with heavenly joys. Yet, when we have passed from the present into the dim future, we shall then look back to the days and hours spent now, with the same enthusiastic sentiment that we cherish now in regard to the days and hours spent in early youth and childhood. In truth, it is natural for us to be discontented with the reality of present existence, and to harbour in our minds, as the years roll on, memories of the past; but the memories we do cherish, are, happily, those of joyous events and feelings, while those of bitterness are usually forgotten. This, in a great measure, accounts for the halo that ever so luminously seems to encircle the brow of past time, and peoples our minds with scenes and ideas borrowed from those, to us, seeming happy days. If grief, shame, and every little care were banished now, the present would seem more delightful than the memory of the past; for, then, joy would be unalloyed by any antipode of sorrow—would be brighter than the past, for its events would not be so obscured by the dust of forgetfulness that is raised in the thoroughfare of life, by the rolling wheels of time.

BIG TREES OF CALIFORNIA.—"Let us first walk upon the big tree stump. You see it perfectly smooth, sound, and level. Upon this stump, however incredible it may seem, on the 4th of July, thirty-two persons were engaged in dancing four sets of cotillions at one time, without suffering any inconvenience whatever, and beside these there were musicians and lookers-on. Across the solid wood of this stump, 51 feet from the ground (now the bark is removed, which was from 15 to 18 inches in thickness), measured 25 feet, and with the bark 28 feet. Think for a moment: the stump of a tree exceeding nine yards in diameter, and sound to the very centre! This tree employed five men for twenty-two days in felling it—not chopping it down, but by boring it off with pump-axes. After the stem was fairly severed from the stump, the uprightness of the tree and breath of its base sustained it in its position. To accomplish the feat of throwing it over, about two and a half days were spent in inserting wedges and driving them in by the butts of trees, until at last the noble monarch of the forest was

forced to tremble and then to fall, after braving 'the battle and the breeze' of nearly three thousand years. This noble tree was 302 feet in height, and 96 feet in circumference at the ground." Again he says:—"A short distance from the above lies the prostrate and majestic body of the 'Father of the Forest,' the largest tree of the whole group, buried in the soil. The tree measured in circumference at the roots 110 feet. It is 200 feet to the first branch. By the trees that were broken off when this tree bowed its proud head in its fall, it is estimated that when standing it could not be less than 435 feet in height; 800 feet from the roots, and where it was broken off by striking against another large tree, it is 18 feet in diameter."—*Hutchings' Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity in California.*

THE FATAL SECRET.

CHAPTER VIII.

I had so fixed my heart upon her,
That whosoever I fixed a scheme of life
For time to come, she was my only joy,
With which I used to sweeten future cares:
I fancied pleasures—none but one who loves,
And deists as I did, can imagine like them.

Olney.

CLAUDE FONTAINE slept little that night. When he retired at a late hour his broken slumbers were haunted by weird visions, and in fancy the scene of the library was acted over repeatedly. He would start up with that familiar voice again ringing in his ears, and it required all the strength of his reason to convince himself that it was not the phantom of a dream.

If it had actually come to him again in the silence of the night, in the state in which his mind then was, the consequences might have been fatal indeed; but in the dreary quiet of the sleeping household no sound was heard that he could not rationally account for.

He arose with the first light of dawn, and walked several miles before the usual breakfast hour, but that meal he ordered to be served in the seclusion of his library, and with it came the note from Miss Carleton which he had desired Giles to send for on the previous night.

He had no appetite, and after drinking a cup of coffee, he dismissed the old servant, and broke the seal. He read the lines twice over, with a strange doubt as to their reality, for the quick realization of the assurance he believed he had supernaturally received seemed to stun his mind and deprive him of his usual clear rapidity of judgment.

Miss Carleton had literally copied the paragraph from her friend's letter, making no comments of her own. It ran thus:

"I have something very singular to tell you, in which that *distingué* Mr. Fontaine, who called on us as a friend of yours when he was travelling, is deeply interested, though the story is so romantic as to be almost improbable. You know that my husband is a shipping merchant, and lately three passengers from Italy arrived in one of his sailing vessels. They were a priest, a lady of middle age, and a girl apparently about seventeen. They all speak English well, though with a slight foreign accent.

"Father Mercadi, the priest, brought with him a letter of introduction to Mr. Elmdy, in which the party were recommended to his kindness and hospitality: they were invited to our house, and have been with us since their arrival.

"Now comes the romance of the affair. They have come to take measures to establish the claims of the young girl, Savella Fontaine, to her father's fortune. The elder lady is the half-sister of her mother, who it seems was married privately to the brother of Claude Fontaine while in Italy many years ago. He was murdered by a jealous rival, and the aunt has reared his posthumous child as her own. She has educated her niece carefully, and she seems a quiet lady-like young person, though not particularly attractive.

"I naturally inquired why they had not before made known the claims of the heiress, and Senora Roselli stated that until very lately she had been unable to obtain authentic information as to who were the two brothers, as they were only known to her family as young Englishmen of fortune, who came to Rome to attend the Easter festivals.

"On the assassination of the younger brother, Claude Fontaine left Rome almost in a state of distraction; her sister lay prostrated by illness, and it was many weeks before she was in a condition to confess her marriage to Henry and produce the certificate which proved its validity. The priest who accompanies them performed the ceremony, and he has brought with him the proof which authenticates it.

"I remember with interest the attractive child Mr. Fontaine had with him when he visited us; he told me that she was his adopted daughter, and it

was his purpose to endow her with his whole fortune. The claims of the new heiress will compel him to divide the inheritance; but from all I hear, it is large enough to bear that, and give a handsome fortune to each one. But Isola, with her promise of beauty and sweetness, must have developed into a far more worthy representative of his family than this girl ever can be; yet her shyness among strangers, who speak a language that is not perfectly familiar to her, probably prevents her from appearing to as great advantage as she might under other circumstances.

"Madame Roselli is still a handsome woman, who expresses herself well, and the priest speaks English as fluently as if it were his native tongue. A few days since he was called into the country to visit an old friend who was known to him in Italy, but on his return the whole party will set out for Fontaine immediately."

The letter fell from Fontaine's hands: it was true then; the warning had only been a prelude to the actual arrival of those who came to invade the privacy of his home, and demand restitution of the rights of the niece of whose very existence he had not hitherto been aware.

As the child of his brother, she was welcome to the fortune that rightfully belonged to her, but of Senora Roselli, whom he well remembered, Fontaine thought with a shudder. To her counsels, to her perfidy, he owed the wretchedness of his life, and he felt as if the demon of his fate was swooping toward him in her person; yet he dared not attempt to evade her.

Senora Roselli must come—she would reign paramount in his house through the dire power she possessed over him, for to her alone was known the dark secret of his life, and he felt that she would yet abuse it to his own undoing.

The tranquillity he had so striven to attain was for ever at an end; under the goading of that turbulent and uncontrollable spirit, he would be crushed till the end came—and what must that end be? He shrank back appalled, and pressed his cold hands upon his burning brow in irrepresible emotion.

Would this ominous trio come upon him without warning? Was it their purpose to take him by surprise, that they had not written to inform him of their arrival in the country, and the object they had in view in coming?

For hours he paced the floor, but his perturbed thoughts were at last interrupted by the appearance of Giles, bearing a waiter on which a letter was placed. It bore a foreign post-mark, and was addressed in a strange hand.

Hastily dismissing the old man, Fontaine tore it open and read the following words:

"MR. FONTAINE: Sir,—I address you in behalf of a young relative of your own, who has hitherto been prevented by circumstances from making known her existence to you.

"Till very lately the long-sought clue to the home and position of your deceased brother could not be gained, though it has been diligently sought for years. He left a daughter, who has been educated with the belief that she would yet be able to discover the abode of her father's family, and claim the inheritance he left behind him. The writer of this is a humble priest by whose aid the tie that bound together the parents of this young girl was cemented. The certificate of the marriage is in my possession, and I have never ceased to take a warm interest in the helpless child whose father perished by violence, and whose mother survived her birth but a few hours.

"Your niece has been educated to fill a high station, and I myself have taught her the language of her father's kindred. She will reflect no discredit on the blood of the Fontaines, proud as I am told it is.

"I write this letter to inform you that she is now in this country, accompanied by Senora Roselli, the widowed sister of her unfortunate mother, and a few days, perhaps a few hours, after this reaches you, we shall be at Fontaine.

"Hoping that we shall receive a hospitable welcome from its owner, I am yours respectfully,

"PIETRO MERCADI."

Though Fontaine had never before suspected the marriage of his brother with Savella Savelli, on reviewing the circumstances, nothing appeared to him more probable, and here was positive proof that it had taken place. The priest who officiated and the certificate were both forthcoming, and the young girl who was on her way to him was certainly Henry's legitimate heiress.

Then a new thought occurred to him, which caused his heart to tremble for the future of his adopted child.

In his anxiety to offer such atonement as was possible, he had annually expended in charity the income arising from his brother's portion of the paternal inheritance. His beneficent donations were secretly given, but from the hour the property came into his possession, every shilling of it had been devoted to some benevolent purpose. The aggregate now

amounted to so large a sum, that if the arrears were demanded, his own estate must be almost absorbed by them, and little be left to portion his beloved Isola.

Would Philip Vane still seek the dowless girl who had been won as the heiress of his wealth? He recalled her recent confession—remembered the worldly spirit of Vane's parents, and shuddered.

If long life were granted to him, he could still endow Isola with such a fortune as would make her a desirable match even to the heir of Durola; but with a constitution broken by mental suffering—a dread weight crushing him into the fearful night of insanity—how could he pledge himself to do so much in the uncertain future?

He already felt the cold shadow of that woman's approaching presence beneath his roof, and he would have given much to be able to provide a safe shelter for his darling before she came to displace her, and enthrone another in the home she had been taught to look on as her own.

He must tell her—he must prepare her for the coming of those who might now at any moment arrive; and after a bitter struggle with himself, he rang, and ordered Giles to say to his young lady that he wished to speak with her in the library.

The old man returned almost immediately, and said:

"The young mistress walked out an hour ago with Mr. Philip, sir."

So, Isola had obeyed him, and Vane had availed himself of the first glimpse of encouragement to seek a confirmation of his newly-awakened hopes. He waited in suspense till he heard them return, after telling Giles that if Mr. Vane wished to speak with him, he would receive him.

The old servant chuckled over this unexpected order, and privately informed Aggy:

"That Master Claude was coming round again; that his last melancholy fit was going off already, and the time was coming when he'd stop getting so strange that he wouldn't speak to any one for days together."

Giles placed himself on the watch for the return of the young people, and when he saw the glowing face of Philip as he came forward with the arm of Isola resting in his own, her hand lying confidently in his, he readily comprehended what had taken place; and after diving into his wife's dominions, to warn her of the probability of a wedding coming off soon in the old house, he respectfully presented himself before Philip, and inquired if he wished to see the master.

Isola had left him, and he was walking to and fro on the lawn in a glow of triumphant happiness. He paused, and spoke in his clear, musical tones, which now vibrated with excited feeling:

"I am extremely anxious to speak with Mr. Fontaine, Giles, but I am afraid he will refuse to receive me. Go to him, you dear old fellow, and if you bring me back a favourable answer, I will give you half-a-crown."

The old man drew himself up with an air of offended dignity.

"Thank you, Mr. Philip, but the people about my master's house do not accept of gratuities. We get enough from him, without receiving presents from the gentlemen we wait on."

Philip laughed, thrust back the coin he had drawn forth, and said:

"Well, well—only get me permission to speak with Mr. Fontaine, and I shall be much indebted to you."

Giles rapped on the door of the library, and when his master opened it, he oracularly said:

"Mr. Philip does want to see you, sir; and I expect he has something very particular to say to you."

"Tell him to come to me, then."

In a few moments Vane entered the room, and grasping the hand of Fontaine with nervous ardour, plunged at once into what he had to say:

"I have come to ask of you the happiness of my life, Mr. Fontaine. I adore Isola—I have ventured to tell her so, and she has referred me to you. Am I too presumptuous in hoping that our mutual affection will have your approval?"

Fontaine seriously replied:

"My dear Philip, but yesterday I would have responded yes with all my heart, but now I am compelled to regret that you have so precipitately spoken on this subject with my daughter. Sit down, and let me tell you what must be made known to you before we proceed a step further in this affair."

Philip thought that he alluded to the unknown origin of Isola, and he quickly said:

"Oh, sir, I love Isola with all my heart, and I can take her appearance and manners as guarantees of gentle birth. No one can look on her and doubt that she is of good blood."

With slight staidness Fontaine replied:

"Of course my adopted child, with her noble nature and graceful accomplishments, is the equal of the best; but I did not refer to that, Philip. It is something that the worldly estimate far more highly than even family. You, like others, have believed that Isola is the heiress of my fortune. Till very lately I thought so myself; but a new claimant has arisen, of whose existence I was ignorant till within the few last hours."

Philip listened in breathless amazement, and the eager flush died out of his face as he faltered:

"I—I do not understand you, Mr. Fontaine. You have always spoken of Isola as your heiress, though of course that has not influenced my choice."

His evident perturbation did not please Fontaine, and he coldly said:

"I shall soon be able to judge as to that, Mr. Vane. Read this letter, which reached me only this morning, and see how materially the prospects of Isola must be affected by its contents."

Philip nervously grasped the paper, and ran his eye over the lines it contained. He felt as if the floor was receding beneath his feet, and so stunning was the blow that for a few moments he was in such a whirl of feeling that he retained no power or thought of self-control.

Fontaine watched him keenly, and the bitter conviction came to him that his heart's darling had found no shelter from the approaching storm in this man's love. He sat quite silent, waiting for Vane to speak.

At last Philip slowly said:

"This is indeed strange and unexpected news. If this young girl is really your niece, why has not her existence been before made known to you?"

"The reason is sufficiently explained in the letter you hold in your hand. Although I never before suspected the marriage of my brother, since that letter came I have recalled many circumstances that confirm its probability. The priest who accompanies my niece brings with him the proof of its legality. I am also well acquainted with Senora Rosselli, who, it seems, adopted her sister's child, and reared her as her own. It is my purpose to receive this young lady as my brother's heiress, and at once transfer to her the inheritance of her father."

"That will be but just. But your own fortune is yours to do with as you please; Isola will have enough to render her acceptable to my parents; for myself, I trust I need scarcely say that I would gladly make her my wife without a farthing; but you know how worldly my father is, and—"

His voice died away in an inaudible murmur, and Fontaine pitilessly went on; he was resolute to probe the depths of his soul, and see if real, pure love was the foundation of his desire to win his darling.

"I must, in honour, say to you, Mr. Vane, that I have used the income arising from my brother's property, it matters not how; it is all expended, and I shall be liable for it to my niece. I have saved little from my own annual revenue, for I can see little use in hoarding money when there are so many good uses for it. Unless the term of my life is prolonged to a much later period than I dare hope for, I shall not be able to cancel this debt without giving Fontaines to my niece as an equivalent. A few thousands are all I can reasonably hope to save for the child of my adoption."

The colour faded from Philip's face as he listened to this *exposé* of Fontaine's actual position, and the letter fell from his nerveless grasp. Why had he been so precipitate as to commit himself irrevocably? A few days of delay, and he would have been forewarned of the precipice over which he hovered, and, without compromising his honour, could have receded from the position of a pretender to Isola's hand.

Then her image arose before him in her young beauty, in her guileless trust, and he felt that it would be bitter to give her up, though bereft of fortune. He spoke with genuine feeling:

"This is a cruel blow, Mr. Fontaine. I am afraid it will shatter the dream of my young manhood into fragments, for my parents will never consent that I shall marry without fortune. You know them—their way of life—their ideas of worldly prestige. I love Isola as I shall never love any other woman; but I fear—I sadly fear that—all that hope of—of our speedy union is at an end."

"Better speak the truth at once, Philip, and say that it is for ever ended," said Fontaine, drearily. "If my child could have found a refuge in your disinterested affection, I would gladly have given her to you; but I plainly see that the heiress was as much sought as the woman, and when Isola comprehends this, she will estimate your devotion at its true value. What has this day passed need not go beyond ourselves, and I wish you to understand that for the future your attentions to Miss Fontaine can be dispensed with."

He arose, stern, cold, and haughty; but Philip started up and impulsively grasped his hand.

"Oh, sir—oh, Mr. Fontaine, this is too hard! You

judge me too hastily. I love Isola deeply, truly; if I were independent of my parents, I would make her my own without delay; but they will never consent to receive for me a portionless wife. I am miserable enough at the destruction of the brightest dream that ever a human heart cherished, without having your displeasure added to the burden I must bear."

"Your regrets will soon pass away, for your nature is not one to cherish that which does not contribute to your happiness; but to her what consolation can I offer for the loss of both lover and fortune at one stroke?" said Fontaine, bitterly. "If you had not spoken of your love, the blow would not have fallen so heavily as it must now do; but I was to blame for that. I thought to save her from the mortifications, the possible unhappiness, that approach; I deemed that your devotion might avert their heaviest weight; but you have shown me your heart, and I pronounce it unworthy of her acceptance. It was better for her to know this before she gave you the control of her fate than to discover it when too late. Good morning Mr. Vane; our interview is ended."

In an agony of feeling, which at that moment was sincere, Philip implored:

"Do not deprive me of all hope, Mr. Fontaine. Let me try what can be done with my father and mother. They both regard Isola with sincere respect and affection, and they may be wrought on to listen to my prayers. Oh, sir! I cannot—I cannot give up one I have loved so long and so dearly."

Fontaine was touched by the earnestness of this appeal, and the lofty dignity of his manner relaxed a little as he said:

"Make the effort if you desire it; but I hope nothing from the result. Your father is a man of the world, and although his resources seem to be ample, he evidently desires to increase them in every legitimate manner. For that I cared not, so long as I believed you sincere in your own attachment to Isola; but, Philip, I cannot conceal from myself that you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. I can read your soul now, and after the first bitterness of this disappointment has passed away, you will even be capable of congratulating yourself on your escape from a marriage that cannot elevate your own interests. I believe that nature gave you many good impulses; but education and example have done much toward perverting them."

Philip listened to these words with varying colour, and he haughtily replied:

"Since such is your opinion, sir, so freely expressed to me, perhaps it is best that we shall not be more intimately connected. I shall mourn over the rupture of the tie that binds me to Isola, but even that is better than the endurance of contempt from him with whom I should be so nearly connected through her, if she became my wife. Good morning, Mr. Fontaine; I came hither happy and hopeful; I leave wretched and broken-hearted."

Fontaine did not offer him his hand, and bowing profoundly, Philip Vane went out, looking so different from the radiant man that entered the library, that Giles hastened to inform his wife "that no wedding was to come off after all, for the master had sent off the young gentleman looking as if the world had come to an end for him."

Isola saw the face of Philip as he came from her father's apartment, and she was heart-struck by its expression. She had been pacing to and fro on the lawn awaiting the termination of this momentous interview on which she fondly believed the happiness of his life depended, and when he came forward pale, despairing, she rushed impulsively toward him and exclaimed in breathless emotion:

"Oh Philip, what can have happened? Why—why do you wear such an expression as that?"

"Ask him," he hoarsely responded, pointing in the direction of the library. "He has crushed every hope out of my heart. Oh Isola, you will not believe me mercenary whatever may happen. I love you; I will always love you alone!—believe that, if it will console you, though fate may forbid our union."

She shrank away from him bewildered.

"What can so have changed him? It was at his express command that I permitted you to address me."

"And yet he has—go to him, Isola, let him tell you himself what has happened. Yet, but for his hard and cruel words, I would never have resigned my claims on you—never!"

"Then you have resigned them?" and the words seemed rather to be breathed than spoken, though the flashing eyes and curling lips expressed more scorn than wounded affection.

"I have not given up all hope, Isola, though a union between us is just now impossible."

She spoke more firmly now.

"If such is my father's decision, Mr. Vane, he must have good reasons for it, and I recall the pledge I gave you on conditions which, it seems, are not to be fulfilled."

She was turning away, anxious to conceal from him the expression of anguish which she felt her face must bear upon it, but Philip caught her hand, and impetuously carried it to his lips.

"Your pride belies your true nature, Isola. If you have truly loved me, you cannot give me up at the command of your guardian. If my parents give their consent, I will yet bear you off in triumph."

She released her hand from his grasp, and the colour slowly returned to her cheeks, as she firmly said:

"I am devoted to my father above all earthly beings. What he desires me to do I would attempt, even if it broke my heart to do so. I shall give my hand to no lover who has not his full and unconditional approval."

"And this you call love!" exclaimed Philip, passionately. "You have never really cared for me. I see it plainly enough now, for if you loved me you could not speak thus."

"Philip," she gently replied, "with me there are things too sacred to be tampered with, and the chief one is my entire devotion to him who has stood to me in the place of a father; so implicit is my faith in his goodness and just judgment, that I can never find it in my heart to dispute his authority, to rebel against his absolute control over my earthly destiny. I do not deny the preference I have felt for you; but if he condemns it 'tis not without good cause, and when I have heard his reasons I shall feel bound to submit to them. Your heart will not break over this disappointment, and mine may suffer, but it knows how to endure. Good-bye, Philip! forget the words that passed between us so short a time since, and be as happy as I fancied I might have made you."

She held out her trembling hand, which he grasped with such ardour as almost made her cry out; but she crushed back the emotion that threatened to suffocate her, and saw him depart without uttering the cry to return that arose to her lips; for, heroic as was her submission to the will of her guardian, Isola felt that in that moment she had resigned the first bright dream of her opening life.

Yet it was Philip's personal beauty that had fascinated her artist soul, more than the changeless love which endureth to the end.

She had believed him devoted to her, and, flattered by his graceful attentions, she had been won to return his affection, in the delusive belief that the outward perfection of his form was the symbol of the lofty and noble soul within.

When once convinced that there was little correspondence between the physical and moral beauty, she would have strength to put aside her passing fancy; but now it was with deep anguish she saw him depart in anger, perhaps never to return.

She threw herself on a sofa, and, burying her face in the friendly pillow, a torrent of tears burst forth which somewhat relieved the tension around her heart.

CHAPTER IX.

Oh, most adored, oh most regretted love!
Oh, joys that never must again be mine!
And thou, lost hope, farewell! Mrs. Tighe.

A HAND whose touch was familiar to her, was placed tenderly on Isola's head, and lifting it, she saw Fontaine regarding her with an expression of infinite sympathy, and compassion. She started up, threw herself upon his breast, and exclaimed:

"Oh father! why—why have you done this? But yesterday you bade me encourage Philip, and to-day you have sent him for ever from me."

"Come with me to the privacy of my library, and I will explain to you, Isola, what may appear inconsistent in my conduct."

Fontaine almost carried the agitated girl across the lawn, and on gaining the library placed her in a large chair near the open window.

When she seemed more composed, he gravely spoke:

"Pardon me, Isola, for I feel that I have been greatly to blame. Yesterday I acted under a strange presentiment that great changes are about to take place in this family; changes which must deeply influence your happiness. I then believed that Philip Vane was sincere in his attachment to you, that he would sacrifice much to gain you, and I wished to secure your future from every chance; therefore, I spoke to you as I did."

He paused, and after taking a few troubled turns across the floor, he returned to her side, and resumed, in a tone of even deeper pathos than before:

"Isola, my presentiment has assumed a tangible shape, and Philip has himself receded from the proposal he made in the belief that you were to become the heiress of my fortune. I do him the justice to believe that he loves you, but when he learned that circumstances have occurred which render it impossible for me to endow you with my fortune, he showed me

unmistakably that the heiress was as much sought as the beloved one. I asserted your dignity by dismissing his pretensions at once."

While he spoke many changes of feeling swept over the expressive face of the young girl. She wiped away her tears, and the glow of pride appeared upon her cheeks, as she replied:

"I believed Philip as noble and true as he is beautiful; but if he is what you assert, I will tear his image from my heart. Why should he have assumed that I should inherit your wealth? I—the creature of your bounty—the lonely wraith that must have perished but for your kindness! Oh, sir, believe that I have never aspired to that—that I have never expected more of your generosity than the home you have given me beneath your roof—the education which has placed the means of independence within my reach."

"I have myself given rise to these expectations, Isola, for I have never concealed from my friends my intention to endow you with my fortune. Till this morning, I believed that I possessed the right to do so; but a strange revelation has been this day made to me, which takes from me the power to control the disposition of my estate."

"I trust that no misfortune has happened to you, sir?" she apprehensively asked. "For myself, I can labour to attain independence, but you, so generous, so charitable to others, oh! I hope that nothing has occurred to take from you the control of your property."

"It is like your generous nature, my child, to be more thoughtful for others than for yourself," said Fontaine, with emotion. "No, Isola, so long as I live, my property will be held in my own hands, but at my death it must devolve on a new claimant, who comes hither to assume the position I have always designed for you. My brother's daughter has come from Italy to claim the inheritance, and the long arrears she is entitled to claim must task my utmost ability to pay. Read this fragment from Mrs. Elmsly's letter to Miss Carleton, and then the letter from the priest who accompanies my niece, and you will understand as much as I do myself."

Isola eagerly read them over, and with brightening eyes exclaimed:

"Oh, how happy you must be to hear of the existence of this young lady, your brother's daughter! Of course, she must be mistress here, but I shall still be your own child. I can still show you how tender and faithful is my gratitude for all your goodness to me. I have never aspired to the position of your heiress; never have dreamed that you wished the poor unknown child your benevolence rescued from destitution to be considered as such. Thus you see that I have lost nothing but a heart that has proved faithless in the hour of trial; I shall suffer from learning this, but it is better known now than later."

Fontaine was deeply affected. He drew her silently to his breast, while he muttered a mental prayer for the reward of her disinterested faithfulness to himself.

When he released her, he said, in an agitated tone:

"The first place in my heart will always be yours, my sweet consolation, for what you have been to me heaven alone can know. Your home will still be with me—your privileges those of a daughter of the house, even if my niece is installed as its future mistress. I shall still be able to provide for you as becomes the training you have received, so do not speak of earning your own living, for no such thing will be necessary."

"Thank you, dear father! From your hands I am willing to receive everything, as I have hitherto done; and the consciousness that I am important to you will suffice for my happiness. You shall see no shadow on my brow—no repining over the loss of a faithless heart. I will show you that I have strength to conquer an unworthy prepossession. Now let us speak of your niece. Tell me of those early days in Italy—of your lost brother."

An expression of intense pain swept over Fontaine's face, and he mournfully said:

"Ask me not to refer to that portion of my life, Isola. As to its living moments, I dread beneath my roof the presence of the young girl who is coming. As the daughter of my unfortunate brother, Henry, I will be strictly just to her; but I would have given much if she had remained in the land of her birth, and only called on me for the restitution of her fortune. But she is coming hither; she brings with her a woman of imperious temper, who will seek to sway all around her. But Senora Roselli shall have no power over you, my love. I will protect you from her at all hazards."

Isola listened in surprise.

"As a stranger here, this lady will scarcely attempt to interfere with the management of your family. I think I can protect myself from her encroachments if she attempts to make them. I have more spirit and independence than you give me credit for, father. I am

sure that I shall love your niece, and I hope that I shall be able to win a place in her heart."

"If she is a worthy representative of her family, that will be an easy task, Isola. You must think no more of Philip than you can help, my dear; for I declare to you, on the faith of an honourable man, that I am convinced he is unworthy of a single regret."

Her lips slightly quivered, but she repressed the convulsive sigh that arose from her heart, and hurried to her own room to weep a few tears, which were soon indignantly dashed away. Conscious that employment was the best remedy for the sadness that oppressed her, she set herself resolutely to work to prepare for the reception of the strangers, who might arrive at any moment.

The house was spacious and every portion of it appropriately furnished. Isola walked through the bedrooms, and selected those she thought most suitable for the accommodation of the new guests. A chamber adjoining her own, which commanded a fine view from the windows, she destined for the heiress; and on the opposite side of the hall were two others, one of which she assigned to Senora Roselli, and the other to the priest. The latter she did not suppose would become a permanent resident at Fontaine's, as after placing his *protégée* under the protection of her uncle, he would probably wish to return to his native land.

While Isola was thus employed, Aggy came up with a bewildered expression, and that ashen colour overspreading her face which indicates deep and painful emotion. When she saw her young lady, she broke into a wailing cry, and said:

"Oh! that ever I should live to see this weary day. A new mistress—a foreigner—is coming to the old place! Mr. Claude told me and my husband; and the joy of my heart has to make way for this stranger, who knows nothing about our ways, and who won't care for the servants any more than they can tend and wait on her. Oh dear, oh dear!"

Isola softly said:

"This young lady is your master's niece, Aggy. She is of the old Fontaine blood of which you so often boast. Do not judge her harshly before you have seen her, and I am sure she will be untrue to her race if she is not kind in her nature."

And *you* can talk in praise of her, you blessed angel! for you are one, if the blessed Master ever allowed one to come down to this earth. Young mistress, you've been raised with us, and you understand us, but this new mistress is from foreign parts; they're good for nothing, and I never saw any of those jabbering people that cared for anybody but themselves. She'll be hard on us—I know she will, for I feel it in my bones."

At another time Isola could have smiled at this quaint expression, but now her heart was too full of its recent sorrow to indulge in even the semblance of mirth. She said everything to the old woman that could reconcile her to the course affairs had taken, and Aggy gradually took a more cheerful view of the future. With resignation to the will of heaven she said:

"Maybe it'll be all for the best, my lady, and Providence knows what to send to us all. I haven't been a church member all these years without finding out that I've no right to set up my will against his. He'll do the best for us all, little as we deserve it. But the new mistress needn't expect me to think as much of her as I do of you, and if that lady that's coming with her tries to exercise authority over me, I shall just let her know that one mistress about the house is enough, and you have been that since you was a little creature."

"My good Aggy," remonstrated Isola, "you have too much respect for yourself to step out of your place to be rude to a stranger. Leave me to take care of myself; I am sure that I can get along smoothly with these strangers, if I am left to pursue my own course."

"I believe you, dear; and the old woman is a born natural to talk so fool-like. Nobody can be cross to such a sweet-spoken angel as you are. I promise you that I'll do my best to please them, and try and hold my unruly tongue; but they mustn't try me too far, for if the spirit is willing the flesh is weak. Come now, what were you looking in these rooms?"

"I was making a selection for our new friends, and looking around to see that everything is in order."

"I can answer for that, Miss Isola, for I look after everything myself every day. Young girls are uncertain creatures, but my grand-daughter is about as good as the best, at least about here."

"Yes, she makes me an excellent waiting-maid; I have no fault to find with her."

"And you wouldn't speak it, if you had. I do hope that Master Claude will at least let the child still wait on you, for it would break her heart to leave you for any one else."

At the suggestion of such a possibility, the heart of

Isola painfully contracted, for she had formed a strong attachment to the young girl, who had been her constant attendant since she came to Fontaine's. She quickly said:

"Have no apprehensions on that score, Aggy. My father will do all that is right, you may be sure."

"I hope so; but my experience of most folks is, that they are very uncertain—not but Master Claude is an exception to the common rule. I know he's a good man; but he looked very strange when he came to tell me about these new people, and I sometimes think that something's working here," placing her hand on her forehead, "that ain't quite right. None of the Fontaines was ever out of their minds, as I know of; but if such a thing is ever to happen at all, there must be a beginning somewhere in the family, you know."

Isola felt as if a sudden blow had been dealt upon her heart: the strange melancholy of her guardian, his periodical seclusion from all society, had sometimes awakened the same fear. She remembered overhearing two ladies talking of him, and one inquired of the other if there was any hereditary tendency to insanity in the Fontaine family, at the same time expressing her opinion that Fontaine's peculiarities would some day assume the form of mania.

She knew that Aggy was an acute observer, and she asked, with a faltering voice:

"Why should you suppose that such a calamity will ever fall on so good a man as my father? He has had much to sadden his life that I do not understand, but he is a true Christian, Aggy, and I trust that God will continue to bless him with health both of body and mind."

"I pray for the same, miss, and I hope that our prayers will be answered: that is all we can do, and now that I have brought the tears in your pretty eyes with my gabbling talk, I had better get back to my work and make the house ready for the reception of these strangers."

When she was again left alone, Isola sat down and fell into a painful reverie. She had never indulged the expectation of becoming Mr. Fontaine's heiress, and in truth she was too young and too ignorant of the value of wealth to understand the change made in her own position by the advent of his niece. But she instinctively dreaded the changes about to be made, on account of her protector. His will was law to the whole household, and there were times she knew when company or loud voices were oppressive to him. She had accustomed herself to watch his moods, and at such seasons to remove from him everything that could annoy him, but in the new order of things about to arise how could she hope to accomplish this?

Isola began dimly to realize that she must submit to become a cypher in the house which belonged by inheritance to Savella Fontaine, and possibly she might even be regarded as an interloper. She endeavoured to drive these unwelcome thoughts away, but they would intrude again and again, and Philip mingled painfully in the drama her fancy was picturing forth.

If Fontaine judged him accurately—if the wealth with which he had supposed she would be endowed, had been his chief attraction toward her, would he not readily transfer his allegiance to the one who came to claim it?

In vain did Isola repeat to herself that in that contingency she should despise Philip too much to regret his loss; she knew that it would be bitter pain to her to see him as devoted to another as he had lately been to her, and if Vane could have seen her pale face, her languid eyes, from which she would not permit the tears to fall, that were recoiling on her severely-tried heart, he would have believed his own assertion—that he should yet bear her off in spite of Fontaine's opposition.

Isola did not again see her guardian on that day. When he came in from his walk, Fontaine retired at once to his apartment and remained strictly secluded through the remainder of the day.

Isola was glad of this, for her head and her heart ached in unison, and when Fanny Berkeley rode over to Fontaine's late in the evening, she was half-tempted to refuse to receive her. But as Fanny was a privileged person in that house, Isola could not well evade the interview, to which she scarcely felt equal.

On hearing of the indisposition of her friend, Fanny sprang upstairs and burst into the room in a glow of excitement.

"I have but a moment to stay, Isola, for I came over under the escort of a groom, and grandpa told me to be sure to come back before dark. What is the matter with you? Your face is flushed, and I do believe you have a fever."

"Oh, no, nothing so serious as that. My head only aches badly; I shall be quite well to-morrow; in fact, I must be well to do the honours to the strangers we are expecting."

"That is news to me indeed. Who are coming, and where do they come from?"

"You have not heard, then? I thought perhaps cousin Carrie had told you. My father has received a letter informing him that a niece, who was born in Italy, is now on her way to him, accompanied by her aunt and the priest who married her parents. We shall look for them every hour till they arrive."

Fanny looked astounded; she dropped into a chair beside the bed on which Isola reclined, and asked:

"Why, where on earth has she kept herself all this time that her uncle knew nothing about her? for if he had, he would have brought her here before now."

It seems that her father was privately married to her mother, who died a few days after her birth—Henry Fontaine, you know, was murdered, but I cannot explain how it occurred."

"And you? Oh! Isola this will be a severe trial for you, I am afraid."

"No, my dear Fanny. I have never calculated on inheriting Mr. Fontaine's fortune, and I shall be glad to have a companion of my own age who, I hope, will permit me to love her."

Fanny impulsively grasped her hand.

"You dear Isola! you are the best and most disinterested girl I ever saw. But there's one good thing: Mr. Fontaine won't permit any one to impose on you, for he loves you too much for that."

"I am not afraid of that, Fanny. My headache was not caused by apprehensions for my future, I assure you. Blessed with the affection of my dear father, I can always be happy."

Fanny bent over and kissed her forehead; then, after a few moments' silence, she asked:

"What will Philip say to this change?"

She saw the pale shadow that crept over Isola's face, and was quick to interpret it; but she was too delicate to speak further on the subject.

Isola rallied all her strength and firmly said:

"Mr. Vane is already aware of it. He saw my father this morning, and—and he will never be more to me than he now is."

Fanny burst forth indignantly:

"What! did Philip Vane dare to show that his late devotion to you was instigated by mercenary motives? He evidently wished to marry you, Isola, and last evening I thought you showed that you liked him better than one who is worth a dozen of such men. Oh, me! what am I saying! I could bite my tongue for letting out poor George's disappointment."

"There is no harm done, my dear Fanny. Your brother has made no secret of his attachment to me. He knows that I have a great regard for him; but, now, I think I shall never marry at all. I will devote my life to my dear father, who may need me in the future. Let us not speak further of this; but do not judge poor Philip too harshly, for I believe that he really loves me."

"Love!" repeated Fanny, in a tone of intense scorn. "No, Isola, Philip's feelings do not deserve that sacred name. He cares more for his own precious self than for all the rest of the human family, yourself included. Doubtless he spoke of the opposition of his parents now you are no longer an heiress; but fond of money as Mr. and Mrs. Vane are, they are not one iota behind their son in that respect. There! I have spoken my honest thoughts, Isola, and if Philip's fascinations and beauty have touched your heart, I advise you to rid yourself of their glamour as soon as possible. You see that I am wise enough in my own conceit to offer counsel to you, madcap as I am considered."

Isola faintly smiled.

"And very good counsel it is, Fanny. I shall implicitly follow it, since it coincides with my own judgment."

"That is lucky, for I have remarked that people never take advice that does not tally with their own feelings."

Fanny then asked innumerable questions concerning the strangers who were coming, and after learning all that could be told, she said:

"I came over to bring you a piece of news; but the catastrophe about to happen drove it all out of my head, important as it is to me. George is going away almost immediately. He has accepted the position of *attaché* to the embassy to Russia, and he will go to Washington in a few days. To console me for parting from him, he promises to write back everything that can interest me, and to bring back to me any quantity of Russian furs. But I do hate to see him go, and now I shall regret it more than ever."

"I cannot see why, Fanny," said Isola, with awakened interest. "It will be a great advantage to your brother to travel, and have admittance into a brilliant and polished court like that of the Czar. Congratulate George for me, and tell him I think he has acted wisely."

"Well, yes, perhaps he has, according to the

wisdom of this world; but I should like to know what is to become of me in his absence? Here am I, a young lady without a single bean, and my only legitimate slave about to run off to the wilds of Russia. I thought when George left college I should have him to wait on and escort me everywhere. Heigho! I am afraid I shall be reduced to flirt with Philip now you have thrown him off; only I am afraid he will desert me for the new heiress."

The expression of pain that flitted over the expressive face of Isola warned the giddy girl that she had wounded her friend, and she tenderly said:

"Forgive me, Isola. I was thoughtless; but the possibility may prove a reality, and forewarned is forearmed," you know. I must go now; the sun is getting very low, and I shall have to scamper back at the top of Dashaway's speed, to be home in time to escape a reproof. I shall come to see the Italian girl as soon as I hear she has made her appearance. My! won't this be news to carry home!"

Bidding her friend a hurried adieu, Fanny dashed out, mounted her spirited steed, and rode rapidly away in the direction of the Vale, followed by her groom.

As the shadows of night gathered round the old house, Fontaine vaguely thought of the strange incident of the previous night, and wondered if it would again be repeated. His nervous system had received a shock which still vibrated painfully, and the gathering darkness became oppressive to him. He stood beside the open window and in his heart adored the stars that gleamed from the deep blue concave above, for he was one to whom nature in all her aspects is beautiful, and full of beneficent power.

After a piercing glance over the silent lawn, Fontaine turned toward the table, and lighting the lamp, took up a book in the hope that in its pages he could bury the unquiet thoughts that filled his breast. He had just begun to comprehend the words his eyes ran over, when a musical clock which stood upon the mantel struck the hour, and then played a chime whose solemn chords had often soothed him in his hour of melancholy. He listened to the sounds as they faded away upon the evening air, and forgot the volume he held.

Silence, only broken by the singing of the myriads of summer insects without, fell upon the room; this was startlingly interrupted by a sigh which seemed to be breathed into his very ear, and the voice that had addressed him on the previous evening, again spoke:

"Claude, my brother, you now know that I was near you last night; that I spoke the truth, for you have received its confirmation."

Fontaine started forward, clutched at the empty air, and in an agony of doubt and anguish, exclaimed:

"Henry, if it is indeed yourself, give me some palpable evidence of your presence. Let me see, let me touch you, that I may know that I am not the victim of a delusion."

"I am here beside you, Claude, but the power is not mine to reveal myself to you in a more tangible manner. The time may come when I shall be permitted to become visible to you. Watch and wait; for now my child is coming hither, I shall often linger near her, and watch over both her and you."

The listener shuddered, and wildly exclaimed:

"Oh, God! what have I done to merit such a visitation as this?"

There was a long pause, and then the answer to his appeal came in a voice which seemed to be receding in the distance.

"I am going, Claude; but look to it that you keep your plighted word. My daughter shall be undisputed mistress here: she must have all."

The voice seemed lost in infinity, and for hours Claude Fontaine sat gazing on vacancy, conscious of a terrible weight pressing on heart and brain, yet incapable of shaking it off. Henceforth he was to become the slave of a phantom; his acts to be watched, his conduct controlled by its dictates! Better far to die at once, and the fearful thought of self-destruction came to him. He had already borne as much as he believed humanity could endure, then why should he continue to drag out an existence that was henceforth to be made even more intolerable to him than it had hitherto been?

He arose, took out a case of pistols, and curiously examined the locks;—one flash, and he was free!

Free?

How could the suicide know that? Into what demon hands might not his enfranchised spirit fall after escaping from its earthly tenement?

Fontaine believed in the immortality of the soul, and he knew that his was stained with a crime which he feared was inextinguishable.

What then would he gain by rushing into the presence of his awful Judge to be cast into outer darkness as the punishment for his own death and the guilt which hung heavily upon his conscience.

Then Isola rose before him, alone, helpless, possibly homeless, and he thrust the dire temptation from him. He replaced the weapons, locked the drawer in which they were kept, and falling on his knees prayed for pardon with a penitent heart.

(To be continued.)

MISTAKEN HONOUR.

WHILE a student in the city of Berlin, whither I had gone to finish my education, I became acquainted with a fellow student, by the name of Jules Langheim.

Jules Langheim was worthy of the friendship I gave him—the love I felt for him. He was a noble fellow—open, candid, high-spirited, and generous to a fault—in every respect the very soul of truth and honour. How I loved him, even from the first! and how that love grew by what it fed upon, till at length it seemed as if his existence was necessary to mine—as if the world would be a blank without him!

At that time we were both young and ambitious, the great world was before us, we had influential friends and high expectations, and many a bright dream of our supposed golden future did we pursue together, till in fancy we stood on the very summit of fame and happiness. Alas and alas! that it was only a dream!

One evening, on returning from the opera, whither I had gone alone—an unusual thing, my friend being pre-engaged for a party at which—I found him slowly walking up and down the room, looking very pale, and evidently more disturbed in mind than he wished to have appear.

"My dear friend, what is the matter?" was my first eager question.

"I fear I have some unpleasant news for you," he said, turning and throwing himself into a large arm-chair. "Upon my honour, Frederick Delorme," he continued, as I stood half-aghost with evil expectation—my soul, as it were, by a kind of presentiment, grasping the future with a shudder—"deeply as I regret what has occurred and is about to happen, I feel it more on your account than my own."

"Speak, Jules!" I cried; "what is it?"

"Over the card-table to-night I had an altercation with Adolph Bergner; and one word led to another, till at last, in a moment of unguarded passion, I gave him the lie direct."

"Well?"

"His friend has called upon me since, and I have referred him to you. I did not know what hour you would return, but requested him to drop in at half-past eleven. It now wants five minutes of the time."

Gracious heaven, Jules, you must not fight!" I exclaimed.

"Now, as a man of honour, can I avoid it?"

"Can the matter not be settled by mutual friends?"

"I fear not. He accused me of cheating, and I called him a liar. Until his charge is withdrawn, mine must hold good; and I am much mistaken, if he is the man to permit a reconciliation by any such means."

"But notwithstanding this, my dear friend, you must not fight!" I persisted. "Think how much more you stake than he. He is a mere adventurer, in one sense, with nothing to lose but his life; while you have character and high hopes, which will be blasted by this one act, even should you escape with life. You know our late college regulations will expel you, and the criminal law will have you at its mercy!"

"Still, what am I to do, my best of friends?" said Langheim, with a troubled look. "If I decline to fight, I shall be branded as a coward, and never more be able to hold up my head among my comrades and fellow students."

"It is a hard case!" I groaned; "either horn of the dilemma is bad enough, heaven knows; but still, let the result be what it will, I must insist that you do not give your adversary a meeting. If merely your life was at stake, Jules, much as I love you, I would not counsel as I do; but to see your reputation blasted, at the very outset of your bright career, would break my heart. No, no, my friend, there must be no meeting!—you must summon up all your moral courage and refuse to go out!"

Jules Langheim started up, and with pale cheeks, knitted brows, and clenched hands, rapidly paced up and down the room, some eight or ten times. Then hastily seating himself at his writing desk, he seized a pen, dashed off a few lines, and folded, sealed and superscribed the note.

"There, Fred, you have your wish—granted to you, only, of all men on earth. I shall not be disgraced by a duel—there will be no hostile meeting between Bergner and myself. When his friend calls, give him that note as your answer, and with that your part in the affair will cease."

"I grasped his hand, and with tears in my eyes said:

"Courage, my noble friend! courage! It is a great sacrifice for you to yield this point to me, I know; but I trust you will be rewarded as you deserve!"

He turned away in great agitation, and at the same moment there came a tap at the door.

"It is Sweitzen—Bergner's friend!" he said. "I will go out."

He seized his hat, wrung my hand with a nervous gripe, and passed the second in the doorway, with a slight salutation.

With Sweitzen my business soon ended. I handed him the note for Bergner, and told him the decision of Langheim would be found in that. He replied that such a proceeding was irregular. I rejoined that I had nothing further to say or do in the matter; and the interview abruptly closed.

After Sweitzen had gone, I anxiously looked for the return of my friend. One, two, three hours passed, and still he did not come. I remained up all night, in anxious hope; but he did not return. Perhaps I should meet him at the morning prayers! But, no—to my great distress, he was not among the assembled students. I made many eager inquiries, but no one had seen him.

I took a long walk through the city, to cool my fevered brain, and was returning to my room, an hour or so later, when some one hurried up behind and tapped me on the shoulder. I turned and confronted a stranger, in the plain garb of a peasant.

"Beg your honour's pardon!" he said; "but might your honour be a student in the college you?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps your honour might tell me, then, how quickest I can find a gentleman named Frederick Delorme?"

"It is my name?" I exclaimed, feeling my blood take a fresh leap at the hope of hearing from Jules.

"It's curious," returned the countryman, beginning to unbutton his coat, "that I should have run after the very gentleman I wanted, to ask him where he might be. Ha! ha! ha! Well, your honour must know that, at daylight this morning, just as I was coming out of my house, a gentleman rid up on a panting horse, and, handing me a letter and ten thalers, made me swear to deliver it before night; and, thinking it must be something consequential, I ran in, snatched a piece of bread, and here I be."

"Well—well! The letter! the letter!" cried I.

"Yes, your honour, here it be," returned the man, thrusting his hand into his bosom and bringing it forth.

I seized it, recognized the writing, tore it open, and read the following with feelings better imagined than described:

"October 11, 4 o'clock, a.m."

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Forgive me for paining your noble heart! for having for once concealed from you my real design! In declining to fight my adversary, I felt that honour demanded from me a proposition requiring at least as great a risk of life, if not of reputation. You remember you said you would permit the risk of life, providing character were not involved. I acted on this, and wrote Bergner I would not fight him, but would decide by lot which of the two should put an end to his own existence. I followed his friend to his lodgings, and we speedily agreed upon the terms. We drew lots, and it was my misfortune to be doomed. According to the compact, I am to die to-day, before sunset, in the village of Neufchatel, thirty miles from the capital. You will probably find my body at the only inn the place contains. Do not mourn too much for me, my best of friends! may God help you and forgive me! It is fate, you see! I have made the best disposition I could, in the short time allowed me, of the property I possess; you will find my testament at the notary's. Time presses me. I write in haste, with a burning brain. You know my feelings toward you, and why attempt the weak expression of words? I will only add, God bless you! God bless you ever! Farewell! Your dying friend,

"JULES LANGHEIM."

On reading this, I was so shocked, so overpowered, so stupefied, that for some minutes I could not act. My brain swam, and the letters before me seemed to take the colour of blood. I roused myself at length, with the hope of being yet in time to save my friend, and darted off like a madman, leaving the countryman staring after me. I hurried to the proper authorities, and got permission to use the government post-horses. In a few minutes more I was on the road to Neufchatel, the postilion urging the gallant beasts forward at the extreme speed allowed by law. Had the rate even been a mile a minute, I should have fancied it the snail's pace, as eager was I to reach forward and snatch my friend from the jaws of death. But our speed was not a mile a minute—scarcely one in five—and hours dragged on, that seemed so

many ages, before my straining eyes beheld a small cluster of houses, that the postilion declared was Neufchatel.

"On, for the love of God!" I cried; "straight to the inn."

Fatal miscalculation! In my terrible anxiety to reach Neufchatel before my friend should put an end to himself, I overlooked the fact that, if living, my arrival, in such a public manner, would attract his attention, and hasten him to the commission of the deed, since it was not his desire to have it prevented. Had this occurred to me on the route, I should have entered the village in a very different manner, and perhaps my friend might have been living now.

On reaching the inn, with a thundering clatter, that drew the whole village out to look at us, I leaped to the ground, seized the astonished landlord, and demanded to know if there was a stranger from Berlin under his roof.

"Yes," he answered, quickly, catching some of my excitement; "a handsome young man—a thief, or robber, may be—or—"

"Quick—quick!" I interrupted; "show me to his room."

We rushed away together. I espied an axe, and seized it as I passed. On arriving at the room door, and finding it fast, I shouted:

"Jules, for the love of God, do nothing rash! It is I—your friend—Delorme: come to my arms and be saved."

"Frederick, farewell!" cried a tremulous voice in reply; and at the same moment I heard the sharp report of a pistol.

With one blow of the axe I split down the door, and rushed in. There lay my friend, in the last quiver of life—a ghastly spectacle—shot through the temples!

Alas and alas! poor Jules Langheim! He was the victim of mistaken honour. He went early to his eternal account, and left many friends to mourn his loss; and one, at least, to weep for him through the long years of a since unhappy life. E. B.

ISLA GRANDE.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CHASE.

THIS piratical schooner was indeed there.

She was moving, under easy sail, in the wake of the silver-ship, and only a few lengths distant. There was no light on her deck, no sign of her crew and not the slightest sound came from her. Still as death, and barely outlined against the lowering sky, she looked more like a spectre than a substantial vessel.

An involuntary cry of anguish came from Ruy.

"Yola is there," he said, in answer to the count's inquiring glance. "If we fight, we ruin death upon her. If we run, we leave her to her fate."

The count understood this horrible anguish, and pressed the hand of the young pilot in silence, at a loss how to console him.

"It's risky business, count, to carry sail with such a sky," said Captain Romero; "but we must try it. We have not had a fair trial of speed with the schooner, and it is possible that we may beat her."

The count nodded assent, but in a way which showed that he had no hopes of escaping the schooner in that manner. Captain Romero proceeded to carry out his proposition, and in a few moments the galleon was in full flight, under the fury of the rising tempest.

"Let's see how the movement is answered, Don Ruy," said the count. "We will watch the schooner."

Glass in hand, Count Regla went aft, stationing himself near the wheel, and bestowed a long and earnest scrutiny upon the enemy. He saw no signs of life about her, heard nothing, but he knew from the increased bulk of her canvas, as a whole, that additional sails had been set, and he was not surprised to see her maintain her exact distance from the chase.

"She's well handled, Don Ruy," he finally ejaculated, with a glance at the sky. "We may as well save our spars and sails; we shall not outlast her."

Captain Romero approached at this moment, and this conviction was shared by him.

The darkness which now had come over the scene would have been terrific on land, but the agitation of the waters left on their surface a phosphorescent glare, than which nothing more ghastly can be imagined. In this weird glow toiled the galleon, pressed down on her side by the strength of the continually increasing wind, under the immense cloud of canvas she carried.

"The fact is, count," said Captain Romero, with some bitterness, "the schooner can keep us in sight easily enough, owing to our size. I am going to change our course, but I hardly hope to avoid the eyes fixed upon us."

He suddenly changed his course, reducing his sails so as to present the narrowest possible surface to the pursuer, in the hope of erasing out of her gaze; but the galleon was hardly settled in her new course when it was seen that the schooner had made a corresponding change, and was coming on as silently and grimly as ever.

"He sees us!" said the count, quietly.

And now there was a sudden gust along the sea, which threw up the caps of the waves in a white foam, and impelled the galleon through the water at a speed that was terrible.

The blackness of the sky increased, its face being covered with serried masses of jagged and fiercely-rushing clouds; but still that phosphorescent glow lighted up the abysses in which struggled the pursuer and the pursued, and presented the ghastly outlines of each vessel to the watchers on the other.

"We shall have to shorten sail, captain," said Count Regla, after a thoughtful pause. "Make all secure against the coming blast, and then return to me."

While these movements were in progress, Ruy scarcely lifted his eyes from the outlines of the pursuer. The thought that Yola was in the hands of the pirate seemed to paralyze his whole being.

"Could we not fight the pirate, Count Regla?" he asked, with a choking sensation at his heart.

"Yes, we might," was the reply, "but fighting is our last resort. The schooner carries twice as many men as we do, is easily managed, presents a small mark, and can run when she pleases. We shall fight, of course, when it comes to that, but it is clear that every advantage is on the side of the pirate."

"And even if we should gain a victory," said Ruy, "we could not rescue Yola. If rendered desperate, our terrible enemy would not scruple to kill her."

The count endeavoured to mitigate the harrowing reflections of our hero, but what could he say? There was no possibility of ignoring either the peril of Yola or that of the galleon. Captain Romero soon returned, reporting that he had prepared against the gale, as well as an attack, and that it only remained to see which of the two vessels would best weather the storm.

In an agony of grief, which we will not attempt to describe, Ruy paced up and down the deck, watching the pursuer.

"One thing is certain," said Captain Romero to the count, "the pirate cannot come alongside in this tempest."

"And another thing," answered Count Regla, "he will not be likely to open fire upon us, and so run the risk of sending us to the bottom. He knows that we are loaded with silver," he added, "and he will not imperil it if he can help it."

With the increased fury of the gale, Captain Romero was called forward by a subordinate, and the count conversed a few moments with Ruy. For a moment the attention of all concerned was distracted from the pursuer, and when the glances of the count and his friends were again bent in the direction where she had last been seen, she was gone.

"Is it possible?" said Count Regla, bringing his glass to his eye.

As surprising as the fact seemed, a long scrutiny confirmed it; the dim outlines of the schooner were no longer visible.

Again there was a lull in the tempest, as if the winds were weary, or as if they were gathering strength for a wilder display of their fury; an ominous hush, and the galleon rolled and pitched heavily upon the huge billows the storm had already called into being.

And now that the waves no longer broke in sheets of foam against one another, the ghastly light emitted in their fury was withheld, and a darkness like that of Erebus came down around the vessel, and hung upon the waters, and gave to the roar of the sea its full horrors.

"When we are done with this lull," observed Captain Romero, "we shall see trouble. There it is," he added, almost in a shout, pointing to the northward. "Dios mio! It is upon us!"

As he spoke, a stream of the hurricane, in one of its wild evolutions and gyrations, came down upon the water with a sharp rush and roar, and tore along its surface, not a hundred yards from the galleon, upon which it seemed to be directed by some evil genius of the wind. A wall of white foam was lifted high in the air at the base of this wind-column, and the next instant it burst around the silver-ship, the wind and sea blended together in a rushing mist, and beating her down upon her side, with the roars and walls of ten thousand furies.

"We must go before it," said Captain Romero to his employer. "Now is our time!"

He took advantage of a moment in which the stream of hurricane seemed to turn on itself, and eased off the galleon before it. The next instant the wind-column

took her in its encircling pressure, and she was borne away helplessly where it willed.

From the midst of this abyss of darkness, a light suddenly flashed upon the gaze of the watchers, from a point about a mile to the windward.

"A vessel evidently," said Count Regla, "but can it be that of our enemy? Would he show a light?"

Before an answer could be given to the question, a second light was seen beside the first, and it was noticed that they both had a swiveling motion, like that of a couple of lanterns suspended in the shrouds of a vessel.

"She nears us!" said Ruy. "It must be our enemy, and he must be conscious of our presence!"

Half-a-dozen additional lights sprang up around the first two, revealing the two masts of a schooner, and it was then clear that the lights were aboard the pirate, and that she was coming.

With the approach of the lights seen from the galleon, the watchers began to trace the outlines of the ropes and cordage among which they were hanging. Other lights were joined to them, with powerful reflectors placed behind, until the entire deck and rigging of the pirate-schooner were a vivid glare. On she came, with sails all closely furled, with only one man visible, and he at the helm.

"My God! she is coming directly for us!" cried Captain Romero. "Will she seek to board us or to run us down?"

The gale seemed setting into a fierce stream of wind, in which the two vessels were being driven helplessly over the sea. It licked up every piece of canvas that was not closely fastened, and twisted off the topmasts of the galleon in their long plunges, as if they had been pipe-stems.

And now the voice of the ship's carpenter fell coldly upon every ear—with the report that the galleon had sprung a leak; but he was unheeded.

The winds and the waves seemed to combine against the galleon, the first striving with her rigging and the last with her hull. At one moment she appeared to be hurled almost out of the water, on the crest of a mad billow, and the next she was plunged down into a black gulf of waters, as though she would never more rise.

The schooner was so near that her every rope and spar under the lights which had been flashed in her rigging, were revealed with glaring distinctness. She showed no sail in the wind, no broken spar, no sound of excitement or confusion; but preserved the same silence and grimness which she had before shown. Another moment, and the commander of the schooner was seen, in the glare of the lights, to come out of the cabin and advance to the bulwarks amidships, with a figure under his arm. A covering fell from a huge lantern, which had been lashed to the forebush, and a broad glare of light descended upon him and his weird-looking vessel.

And now that the schooner was so near, so clearly seen, she seemed to advance upon the galleon with a speed that was supernatural. The eyes of all aboard the silver-ship were fixed upon her, and the hush of expectancy kept every tongue silent. On came the wicked-looking craft, under bare poles, and with the water rolling up in a wall of foam before her prow, and roaring and hissing under the fury with which her light hull was driven through the waves—on, with her lights glaring, and with that silent figure clasped to the breast of its commander.

"Oh, my God!" cried Ruy, leaping upon the bulwarks of the galleon, as the girl in the pirate's arms strove with him, raised her head, and sent a piercing cry over the waters, "it is Yola!"

There was no time to say more.

Clasping her form in his grim embrace, as if making her a protecting shield, the pirate chief leaped into the shrouds, under the glaring lantern, and fixed his gaze upon the helpless galleon. His huge form seemed to expand to giant size, as he shook his clenched hands toward it, and a hollow laugh broke from his lips. On he came, rushing along the wake of the galleon, and only turning aside sufficiently to admit of passing in safety. On he came, with mocking gestures and triumphant laughter, mingled with the cries of his captive, and in another instant he was borne alongside of his intended prey—so near that they could see the gleaming of his savage eyes and hear his chuckles of delight as he shouted:

"Well met, Ruy Leol! Well met, Count Regla! I have the lovely Yola here, and shall soon have those millions of silver! Mine! all mine! I swear it, or my blood shall mingle with the waters beneath us! Adieu till the morning—then we meet!"

And then the schooner swept ahead of the silver-ship, and a general cry of excitement, grief, and horror arose from the galleon's decks. Unheeded were the cries of the carpenter, who was still dancing about and crying that the vessel was sinking; forgotten were the wild billows and the howling blasts still sweeping the sea; and forgotten were the millions of treasure in the hold of the doomed ship. For, with

the screams of Yola still ringing in their ears, and with that terrific spectacle driving on before them, the observers could hear nothing and think of nothing but the terrific cry with which the pirate chief had left them: "Adieu till the morning—then we meet!"

CHAPTER XX.

THE PREY.

THE schooner swept past the prow of the silver-ship, and the cries of Yola ceased to be heard, she being borne below.

The lights were removed from the pirate's rigging, and extinguished, and the darkness that succeeded seemed all the more terrible by contrast with the recent illumination.

For a few moments the dread visitant was visible, driving away to the leeward, and then the spectral outlines of her hull and spars faded out from the view of the watchers.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed the Countess of Regla, who had remained at her husband's side, despite the tempest. "She's gone!"

The gale now being at its height, its roar was such that she was obliged to speak in a high key, and place her lips close to the count's ear.

"Gone?" the latter repeated. "She has gone, only to come again. She will certainly be with us in the morning, as threatened. Meanwhile, she will not for one moment lose sight of us. She can see us without being seen—she's so small, so bare!"

"But she's scudding before the wind, light as a feather, and gaining on us—"

"She will not go far," interrupted the count. "She knows that we are clumsy, and must continue this course comparatively helpless. Nay, with such a craft, manned by such a numerous crew, the Bloodhound can sail around us a dozen times before morning. No, no, he will not lose sight of us!"

"Then there's no hope of our escape?"

"None. That terrible being does not deceive himself. Just so certainly as that poor girl is in his hands, just so certainly will he have our silver—our lives! I foresee what his course will be in respect to our capture, and am sick at heart!"

The countess sighed, wiping her tear-wet face. She had been terribly moved.

"Poor Yola!" she said. "Our young pilot is greatly to be pitied. What a blow her captivity is to him!"

"Yes, it's horrible. We must do what we can to console him!"

They advanced towards Ruy, who had not once spoken since the voice of Callocarras died away on his hearing. He remained clinging to the bulwarks, deathly pale, and completely crushed in spirit by the full realization of Yola's peril and misery. Senor Leol had joined him, endeavoring to comfort him, but had not been able to inspire him with any hopes respecting the captive. The truth was, Ruy's clear perceptions had already told him the same sad story which had come to the count's understanding—that there was no present help for her!

"Our hearts bleed for you, Don Ruy," said the countess, pressing his hand. "There's no mistake, I suppose—the captive is really your betrothed?"

Ruy replied affirmatively, and a pause succeeded, partly owing to the difficulty of conversing in such a howling tempest.

Captain Romero had comprehended the report of the carpenter, and gone away with him.

"There is a matter, Don Ruy," said the count, after a thoughtful pause, "that we shall discuss with you when an opportunity offers. The more we see of you the more we are drawn to you. For certain reasons we have been struck by your appearance and conduct, and your very name is a tie. But we will not now intrude upon your grief. Suffice it to say that we are your friends, and that we will stand by you to the last moment. Ah! see there!"

The schooner was again visible, lying too, a little off the course of the galleon, and apparently waiting for her to pass. In fact, the instant the silver-ship had again taken the lead, the pirate fell off before the wind, under a fragment of sail, which looked like a dusky wing, and again followed her prey, thus making a complete circuit around her.

"A vulture does not circle around its prey more surely," said the countess. "You said truly, querido mio—the eye of the enemy is upon us."

They continued watching the schooner until she had again passed near the galleon, and was fading out of sight ahead of her, and then Captain Romero reappeared to report on the leak.

"The ship is strained a little forward, count," he declared. "and I found that she has taken in some water, but the leak can be kept under by a moderate use of the pumps, I doubt not, and may be effectually stopped at daylight, when the gale has abated."

He added that he had put working parties at the

pumps, and was now intending to make another effort to give the pirate the slip in the darkness.

"Very well, captain," responded the count. "Do what you think best. We will leave you in full possession!"

He took Ruy by the arm and drew him and the countess away to the cabin.

The efforts of Captain Romero to escape the enemy were so fruitless that we will not linger upon them. It is enough to say that every movement of the galleon was foreseen and provided for, and that the schooner, now visible, now invisible—at one moment ahead of her prey and at another behind her—continued to move as she pleased about the doomed vessel.

All the night long the silver-ship continued to be tossed helplessly on the waters, the storm raging furiously for hours, or till near day, and then beginning to abate. With the breaking of day, the count and Ruy were on deck, looking at the schooner, which was still in sight.

There she was, about a mile to the eastward, with reefed sails, and with her delicate spars outlined against the gloomy sky—and as safe and uninjured as though she had spent the night in her land-locked retreat near Isla Grande.

"The wind will give her no further trouble," said the count, bitterly. "She will now run down to us. The pirate will make your betrothed, Don Ruy, one of the means of our capture!"

"Shall you fight him, count, or will you surrender?"

"That depends upon the circumstances under which he approaches us," was the reply. "I may say, however, that I shall not imperil the life of your betrothed. It is hard to lose our wealth, but its loss can bear no comparison with the loss of such a life. Since the pirate, in having such a captive, wields a terrible power over us, it would be neither brave nor wise for us to resort to acts of desperation. We will do all we can, in accordance with humanity, and leave the rest with the great Master of Life. Keep your eye on the schooner, Don Ruy, while I say a few words to the countess."

Proceeding to the cabin, he found his wife pacing the floor in a state of great anxiety. She had neither slept nor rested during the night, although she had shown a quiet firmness worthy of herself.

"The Bloodhound has, indeed, scented his prey," said the count, folding her to his heart. "You must prepare to see him. First, remove these jewels, lest they invite the sword of some lawless pirate."

The countess calmly removed her diamond *ceinture*, rolling it up and putting it in a large casket, and then took the jewelled sprays from her purple-black hair, the rings and bracelets from her hands and arms, and placed them beside the splendid belt.

"Shall I have to fling them into the sea?" she asked. "If Senor Nerle was a spy for Callocarras, he has doubtless made a report on my jewels. Can I hide them?"

"Instead of hiding them, you had better put them in the keeping of Ruy Leol," said the count. "The pirates will not suspect him of having them, and it is possible that he may escape. In that case they would be a fortune to him. We owe him our lives, you know, love!"

"You are right, husband. I feel in him the deep interest you experienced in him at your first meeting. Please call him."

Ruy was summoned, the jewels confided to his keeping and concealed on his person, and a few less costly ornaments were left carelessly on the table.

"If we die, Don Ruy," said the countess, "consider the jewels a present from us!"

He pressed her hand respectfully and returned to the deck, followed by the count.

A general buzz of excitement had now arisen on the deck of the galleon, for the schooner was approaching rapidly, with the most of her sails set, and her crew swarmed at their stations, all ready for action. Suddenly, while all was bustle and preparation on the Silver Ship, Callocarras came out of his cabin, bearing Yola in his arms, and in another moment had dashed her to the foremast.

"You see, Don Ruy?" said Count Regla, with an air of sorrowful resignation. "The villain makes your betrothed his shield, as I have foreseen and expected."

The preparations of Captain Romero for a desperate fight were paralyzed by this movement, and a general cry of horror arose from the galleon's decks. Nearer came the schooner, with the wind falling and the sea growing calmer, and she was soon within easy hail, when she rounded to, and Callocarras shouted:

"We hope you will not fire upon us, Ruy Leol, you might harm your best friend."

His hoarse voice rang over the water with startling distinctness.

Ruy reeled as if smitten a terrible blow, and became as white as a corpse, his nostrils dilating, his eyes flashing, and his bosom heaving convulsively with his

awful emotions. There was his betrothed, immediately before his eyes—so near that he could mark the terror and anguish written upon her pallid features!

"Base and contemptible miscreant!" exclaimed Count Regla. "There are some men so wicked that they are best left to the Great Avenger, and this is one of them. Have no fear, Don Ruy—we will not fire!"

The critical moment of the galleon's fate having come, her crew thronged around the count and Ruy, excited and expectant. By the count's desire Captain Romero addressed them briefly, showing them the terrible advantages of the pirates, and advising and commanding a quiet surrender. The facts indicating this course were that Callocarras would surely murder his captives, in case of resistance, and that he was not likely to kill his prisoners, if they made no resistance.

"And so," concluded the commander, "as the least of two evils, we will surrender. The count will not be entirely beggared by this event, and if we escape with life there will yet remain a career before us—an opportunity for vengeance!"

Standing on the deck of his craft, with his arms folded across his broad breast, Callocarras had waited for this decision with a quietness which showed how clearly he had foreseen that it would be in his favour. Perceiving how affairs stood aboard the galleon, he ordered out a couple of boats and proceeded to the prize at the head of a score of his men.

"Good morning, Count Regla," he said, with mock politeness as he reached the deck. "I am most happy to see you. This visit is the result of a year or two of watching. I had my agents in Mexico when you were taking aboard your specie. I should not have left you the other night, after the chase which brought you to Isla Grande, had it not been for obtaining some information from a good friend at that island."

"You refer to Senor Nerle, I suppose?" said the count, quietly.

The pirate bowed, and the count turned away, with a resigned expression on his face. Callocarras then approached Ruy, whom he regarded with a smile of deep meaning, as he continued:

"Happy to see you, Senor Leol, having learned from my fair captive who and what you are. Captain Romero, good morning. Senores, all, your most obedient," and he again bowed, with mock politeness. "How is the lovely countess—?"

Before the mocking inquiry could be finished, the countess came quietly from the cabin, attired in her black velvet robes, but without a single jewel. An India shawl was thrown over her shoulders, and, save her unusual paleness, there was not a sign of fear about her. She advanced to her husband's side, and, without a word, placed herself in his keeping. Callocarras bowed low to her, and then gave orders for his followers to instantly transfer the crew of the galleon to the schooner, and confine them in the hold, putting chains enough on them to insure their safe-keeping. These orders were promptly executed, and the pirate then turned to the count and countess, Ruy and Captain Romero, and observed:

"I am sorry to trouble you, friends, but I must ask you to attend me to the schooner."

The count bowed haughtily, following the captor, and the transfer was soon made. Ruy had time enough to exchange a single glance and greeting with Yola as the party swept past. Her sweet and childlike face was pale and tear-stained, and her grieving soul filled him with an anguish that was beyond expression. How vain his wish to save her! He was hurried to the cabin, with the count and countess and Captain Romero, and locked up in a state-room, there to speculate upon his future; and Yola was returned to her gorgeous prison.

Callocarras then took personal possession of the galleon, placing a dozen of his most faithful men aboard of her, and examined into her condition. The result was satisfactory, and he mattered to himself, over a glass of the count's excellent wine:

"I can keep her afloat easily enough until we reach the retreat. The boys do not suspect the value of the prize, and I will take good care that they do not acquire any further information about it. They think that I have been seeking revenge rather than plunder. Good! Her millions belong to me and me alone!"

He went on deck and gave orders for the two vessels to get under way, in a westerly direction, and gave his personal attention to the movement. For a little while he stood on the upper deck of the Eucaudadora, with a smile of satisfaction on his swarthy face, and then he returned to the cabin. The jewels the countess had left on the table were the first objects that attracted his gaze, and as he examined them a savage look of disappointment came into his eyes.

"They're nice enough," he muttered, "but they're not the same. As soon as I get time I'll look into my lady's jewel-cases and find the others."

He locked the cabin door, and then sounded the walls and floor, soon giving utterance to an exclamation of satisfaction.

He next began pulling up the carpet and ripping up the flooring with a kind of frenzied eagerness, his breath coming thickly through his open mouth.

The morning light streamed in through the cabin windows on a strange scene, as he at length paused.

Massive layers of silver coins and bars glittered and shone before him, with a soft and mellow lustre. There were loads upon loads of the precious coins, in bags, just as they had been brought on the backs of mules to the coast.

The eyes of the Bloodhound gleamed fiercer than ever, and he caught his breath in a kind of demoniac joy.

"Yes, there are fifteen or twenty millions!" he muttered, huskily, as he contemplated the treasure from every point of view. "Twenty millions! and not a single coin of it shall go to the boys! All mine—and undivided! Ha! ha!"

He looked exultingly upon it, and continued:

"With this and the lovely little Yola, I'll go back to Cuba, give up my profession, and lead a life of perfect enjoyment! Not a cloud shall mar our joys, not a shadow dim our lot! The days shall pass like a dream of beauty—never fading, never ending!"

With a gleaming expression on his black countenance, he sprang down into the silver, plunged his arms into it up to the shoulders; listened gleefully to the musical jingle of the clashing coins; lifted the bars as if speculating on their value; calculated the depth of this silver mine of coins and bars; and laughed hoarsely in his joy.

"Mine! mine!" he again said, in a husky whisper, looking suspiciously around him, as if the very air and light were spies conspiring to rob him of his ill-gotten booty. "Not a real to the boys from this glittering pile! They must not suspect I have this treasure. I will not take it to the retreat, but it shall be buried at Peak Island, or elsewhere, where it will be forthcoming when wanted, and then all I have to do is to manage Yola!"

With a hoarse chuckle of delight he replaced the flooring, silently and securely fastening down the carpet, and restored the cabin to its previous order.

And then he paced to and fro, muttering and chuckling to himself, with his soul full of joy.

"The first thing," he mused, "is to rid myself of Ruy Leol, the count and his whole party. Shall I make them walk the plank, give them a deadly drug, or—"

The suspended soliloquy showed the villain's character. He was indeed cruel and merciless—a human bloodhound, as he had been so justly named.

"Let me see," he resumed, his white and pointed teeth showing like a tiger's under his smile of satisfaction. "On Yola's account, I must have as little noise and confusion as possible. The main thing is to be expeditious and sure. Yes, I will maroon them!"

He went forth among his followers with a look of joyful triumph upon his features.

CHAPTER XXL

MARONED!

THE schooner and her prize continued to sail to the westward several hours, and at length arrived at a small barren island, less than a mile in length and half a mile in breadth, it being one of those uninhabited sand-keys peculiar to that region. It was, in fact, nothing but a collection of marine rocks, covered with a thin wash of sand in the hollows, and having but little vegetation besides slimy seaweeds and some coarse varieties of weeds and moss.

The vessels were anchored near the rocky shore of the island, and the Count and Countess of Regla, with Ruy and Captain Romero, were brought out on the deck of the schooner, under strict guard, and found themselves again in the presence of Callocarras.

"I am going to maroon you here," said the Bloodhound. "You will excuse me for this measure, senores, and you, most lovely countess, when I tell you that I have no time to entertain you, at my retreat or elsewhere, for the simple reason that all my leisure must be devoted to the sweet little bird I have caged."

"Oh, villain!" came from the stern lips of Ruy. "Would that these hands could have fair play in dealing with you."

Bound as he was, he struggled with the pirate's minions, giving them considerable trouble.

"There—there!" said Callocarras, in a tone of mock soothing, while he bestowed strange glances alternately upon our hero and the Reglas. "Young blood is brave and rash, I know, but you will have no chance to harm me. This island is most delightfully situated, on the score of solitude, and it will afford you a fine place for the practice of patience. I could not very well find a more retired watering-place. I shall have the pleasure of visiting you next week, and per-

haps take the trouble to count the flocks of vultures that hover over your bones."

He bowed, with a look of pretended commiseration, and then ordered out the two largest boats belonging to the schooner.

The order was obeyed.

Count Regla and his party made no objections to the villain's plan of marooning them, feeling a vague sense of relief in knowing that they were not to be murdered outright.

It might have been that their faces expressed their thoughts, for the dusky eyes of the pirate glittered, as he said:

"Don't think, my friends, that you will be rescued here! You are off the route of any vessels. Turtles never come here—and if they did, this is not the season for turtles. Three years ago, I marooned a party on this very island, and their bones still whiten the sands! Not a person has visited the spot in all that time, it is safe to presume!"

There was a despairing expression on Count Regla's face as he listened to these words, and his wife clung to his arm, whispering words of love and tenderness in his ears, striving to mitigate his anguish. She had seen that his noble soul was shrinking from her coming afflictions—not from his own.

The prisoners had already been deprived of all their weapons and bound, and were now lowered into one of the boats and sent ashore. The other boat was loaded with as many men belonging to the galleon's crew as it would carry, and these were also sent ashore.

In a brief space of time, the entire crew of the silver-ship, with the Isla Grande volunteers, was landed, and the pirates returned to the vessels.

"Farewell, Count and Countess Regla, Ruy Leol, and the rest of you," shouted Callocarras, from the deck of the galleon. "I hope you will have a pleasant time at your little summer retreat. *Adios!*"

He made a mocking bow, with a wide sweep of his brawny arm, and his harsh laughter rang strangely over the waters.

The next moment the party on shore saw the anchors of the two vessels lifted, the sails bowing and filling, and the schooner and her prize receded from the island.

Not a word was spoken, but the helpless victims continued to gaze after the vessels until they grew fainter on their vision, seeing the schooner suddenly leave the galleon and use her superior speed, and both passing beyond the horizon.

The count then uttered a groan, so full of agony that it sounded like a knell.

"Sit down, love," he said, tenderly to his wife, supporting her trembling form to a rock near at hand. "I do not grieve for myself, but for you."

He gazed earnestly, with the worshipping eye of a husband, upon the regal beauty of his wife, and shuddered at the thought of that queasily figure becoming emaciated, those rounded cheeks sunken, those lustrous eyes dim and lustreless, from the pangs of hunger and thirst which he would be unable to assuage.

The countess smiled in answer to his yearning look, and said calmly:

"Have no fears for me, *querido*. How much better and sweeter it will be to die together, in each other's arms, than to be separated by the murderer's knife. Let us have hope and faith, my husband."

The count drew calmness from his gaze into her serene eyes, and looked around at his companions.

Ruy Leol was still gazing upon the horizon, at the spot where the vessels had disappeared from his view, fixed in an attitude of despair. His pale face and despairing eyes touched like a sharp knife-blade.

Captain Romero was already talking with his men, answering their questions, and vainly endeavouring to forget the horrors of their situation.

"Do not give up, Don Ruy," said the count, taking the hand of our hero, with paternal interest, and drawing him beside the countess. "Your betrothed will be true to you, and sometime you may be reunited—"

"In heaven!" exclaimed Ruy, in the hollow tones of despair. "My poor little Yola! It was her very innocence and angel beauty that won the heart of the pirate. He will never let her go, now that he has her in his power."

The countess, with all a woman's tenderness, strove to console Ruy.

From some strange reason, inexplicable to herself, her heart went out to him in love, and she yearned over him. For the first time, she now scanned his noble brow and handsome face, and marked the patrician air that made even his coarse garb look rich, and she trembled with a strange agitation, as she noted the complete resemblance he bore to the count.

"We must bear up under our trials, my dear boy," said the count, with emotion. "We sympathize with you, for your loss is irreparable! We feel for your anguish, for we have both known bitter sorrow. But pure and innocent as is your little betrothed, she has



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a mighty defender, and into His hands we must resign her care. You are not alone, Don Ruy. You have your father to live for—have him to console for the loss of your sister."

"Yes," returned Ruy, pressing the hand of the count. "Senor Leol has been very kind to me, and I must not let my grief come between us!"

"Senor Leol!" repeated the count, in astonishment; "why do you not call him father?"

"I do, generally," answered our hero—"but, although he has been a true and kind father to me, I am only his foster-son!"

The count started, while his wife uttered an eager cry.

"Not the son of Senor Leol?" ejaculated the count. "Why, Senor Nerle said you were! Who are you?"

Ruy shook his head, saying:

"I do not know. All that is known of me is that when Senor Leol found me on his porch he asked my name, and I answered that it was Ruy!"

The agitation of his listeners was great.

"How old were you?" demanded Count Regla.

"About four."

Seeing the eagerness and excitement of his listeners, Ruy briefly related his history, as far as known to himself and his good foster-father.

"And you have not a clue to your birth?" exclaimed the countess. "You do not know how you came on the island?"

"I know only what I have told you."

"Let us ask Senor Leol," said the countess, whispering to her husband. "We may learn something from him."

The only additional information gained by questioning the old hammock-maker was the free expression of his suspicions in regard to Padre Lasso and his singular hatred of the boy. He believed that the pretended priest had the secret.

"And there is no way to solve the mystery," said the count; "no way but a personal interview with this priest. What if he should prove to be Rove Laslin, and this little Yola, our lost ward, and this Ruy, our lost son! What happiness! What blessedness! But it can never be on earth. We are all doomed. We shall soon be in the land where all secrets are known, and there only will this mystery be solved."

The countess pressed her husband's arm, and whispered:

"Let us say nothing to Ruy about our lost son yet. The mystery and uncertainty would but add to his grief."

The count assented, and withdrew with his wife to a little distance, where they could talk over the exciting facts of Ruy's history, while our hero devoted himself to Senor Leol.

The sun now burst through the clouds, with all the burning heat of an August noon in the tropics. The heavy swell on the waters dashed against the rocks with a monotonous sound, ceaseless and unbroken.

"Come, boys," said Captain Romero, "we shall be sunstruck here. Let us examine the island and see what we can find in the way of vegetation."

No thorough search was needed. There was not a sign of verdure on the island. It was only a space of desert—hot, barren sands, covered here and there with low and broken ledges of rocks. Not a tree lent its grateful shade, not a leaf of grass or the humblest fruit grew anywhere upon it; but everywhere were the same burning sands, the same low ledges of rocks, cut into jagged peninsulas by the sea.

A little in the interior of the island, on a sandy spot, lay several skeletons, the bones bleaching in the sun, and long since divested of every particle of flesh.

There was no sound of bird or insect life on the island, but there was a funeral stillness in the air, as though death was waiting there for its victims. And away in the distance some vultures were seen coming, as if they had already scented their prey.

"These bones are the remains of the men marooned here by the Bloodhound," said Captain Romero, "Poor fellows! I wonder who they were?"

"They were like us, captain," said one of his crew, touching his hat, and speaking with considerable emotion. "They left wives and sweethearts at home waiting for their return, just as we have done. I wonder how long our bones will be bleaching here before our loved ones know that we are dead?"

This speech threw a gloom over the party, from which they did not rally.

Search was made for water, and a little stagnant liquid was soon found in pools in the rocks, and some of this was eagerly drank, thirst being already felt by the unfortunates.

"Let us save some of the water, such as it is, for the countess," said Ruy, covering the clearest pool with his hand. "We are men, and can endure thirst better than a delicate woman can."

The men respected his wish, and determined to save what water remained until their need of it should be greater. They then returned to the spot where the count and his wife were still engaged in conversation.

All the afternoon, the sun shone like a great brass shield, its rays falling fiercely upon the unprotected

prisoners; and the sands and the water reflected the glare and the heat, so that in order to protect themselves they were obliged to creep between and under the rocks.

The solemn funeral stillness was broken only by the dashing of the waves. The air was hot and stifling, notwithstanding the breeze that flew over the unprotected waste.

Toward evening, murmurs of hunger and thirst began to be heard, and frequent visits were made to the stagnant pools in the rocks.

The count bore up well, as did his wife, but the latter began to look pale, as Ruy noticed, and he approached her, and said:

"I have saved a pool of water for you, and the count, senora. Will you come and drink it?"

The countess assented, thanking Ruy for his thoughtful kindness, and followed him to the pool, assisted by her husband.

The eagerness with which both drank attested their suffering.

"I fear that we have robbed you, Ruy," said the countess, looking refreshed as she spoke.

"Oh, no," was the reply. "I share with Captain Romero and his men."

They returned to the shelter of the rocks, and conversed for some time, the count and countess being surprised at the knowledge shown by Ruy on almost every subject named, and hoping and wishing, yet not daring to name the wish to themselves, that Ruy might prove to be their lost son.

Night came on, and found the prisoners, with parched lips and swollen tongues, eagerly fanning themselves to cool their fever-thirst. The moon shone brightly, but its baleful glare was as unpleasant as the garish sunlight.

The countess reclined in her husband's arms in the shadow of the rock, with Captain Romero and Ruy beside them, but they all sat in silence. None of them could sleep. From every side came the broken utterances of the seamen, the prayer for water, and the request of each man to his comrades that the survivor should carry the sad news of his fate to his friends.

"Oh, God!" said Count Regla, clasping his uncomplaining wife to his breast. "Better to have died in fierce battle than to perish with maddening thirst! My poor darling, my heart bleeds for you!"

The countess caressed her husband, and strove to console him. The prayers and groans of the seamen died away, and over every heart on that lonely and barren waste settled the darkness of despair!

(To be continued.)



[THE CHILD AND CESAR PASSING OVER GLINDON HILLS]

ALL ALONE.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "Self-Made," &c., &c.

CHAPTER I.

THROUGH THE STORM.

Kent—"Who's there, beside foul weather?"

Gentleman—"One minded like the weather, most unquietly." King Lear.

In a humble home, and in a palace in a great city, two children in the same hour were born.

"Genevieve—call her Genevieve!"

These were the last words uttered by the young mother, as resigning the child into the hands of the nurse she sank back upon her pillow.

"Genevieve."

The name so softly breathed forth from the pallid lips of the fainting mother, seemed hailed with acclamation by the world. The merry bells rang forth, and a salvo of artillery thundered over the waters of the harbour.

For at this same moment—at the very instant that the poor mother yielded up her new-born infant to the care of strangers—a child had been born in the palatial home of the Lord of Strathmore.

High and noble were those who received the one—a meek and lowly servant of the poor, a humble Sister of Charity, embraced the other.

For the one was exacted the homage of the world—for the other was asked only its sufferance.

Poor innocent!

God had breathed into her the breath of life, and she became a living soul.

A breath of divine life incarnated—a new soul sent upon this planet to live, to struggle, perhaps to sin, and oh! how surely to suffer.

The advent of another immortal—the miracle of each moment's recurrence, yet an eternal mystery still; the setting in motion of another free power that shall move for ever: the beginning of a life that will have no end!

It is but this instant called into existence—an existence as yet unconscious, for it is without either thoughts or affections; yet one which, when ages have rolled by, must go on for ever and for ever.

How will this soul live?

Will she be wasted by worldliness, or maddened by the tortures of passionate malignity?

We shall see.

Whatever her future may prove, in this one moment

she has all which others have. This breath—this life is the common bond of human brotherhood—in this she peasant and the prince are peers.

Time had rolled on.

It was a winter's night, and a wandering child was passing over Glindon Hills.

A night bleak and dreary enough in the great city, where the snow turned the streets into a monotonous waste—and eddied against the gateways, and played strange tricks with the windows, and dulled the glare of the lamps.

Even there, where there was warmth and light, it was dreary and bleak enough: but over that perilous path which the child's steps were treading, the storm appeared to brood like a demon of destruction.

The path, never safe even in daylight and in the best weather, was now exceedingly dangerous.

The ground was covered with snow, which froze as it fell.

The sky was "blind with a double-dark" of night and of clouds.

With toiling steps and weary feet, the child reached the highest point of the pass.

The snow had nearly ceased to fall; the wind had lulled, or arose only in fitful gusts.

She paused to take breath and look around her, for, though to one coming out of the light into such a scene, nothing would have been visible but the blackness of darkness, yet to the well-accustomed vision of the night-wandering child, certain landmarks were dimly apparent, looming like blacker shadows, denser clouds amid the general gloom.

Her keen sight could decry the heavy vapour-laden range of hills that marked the opposite horizon, and even distinguish their spectral peaks from the murky mists that hung around them.

Then she looked down below her feet. Between the ridge upon which she stood and that opposite ridge against the horizon, a sea of impenetrable shadows seemed to roll.

She knew it was a wilderness of forests, rocks, and streams—at this time a pathless desert, a horrible Gethsemane, without sign of human habitation, with no sight out the black, blacker, and blackest shadows of the night, clouds and storm, and no sound but the roaring of the wind among the ravines around, and the howling of some hunger-maddened animal prowling through the forest.

But never had man or woman a stouter heart than that which beat in the bosom of that child. Her fearlessness, like her safety, seemed almost supernatural; yet the one was the effect of the other, and both were the result of her organization and her training.

The descent was much more difficult and dangerous than any part of the journey had been, yet the child did not falter.

Her voice was elastic and firm as her foot was sure and springing, as she said:

"I see no light yet; but courage, *Cesar*. This is the north ridge; we must be near Donby House. Go on, my friend!"

The great black Newfoundland dog which crouched at her feet arose slowly, stretched his heavy limbs, and putting one ponderous foot before the other, went on gravely and with a wearied tread down the hill.

It was with care, almost with fear, that she followed him.

The path, as they descended, seemed but a formless precipice of clouds and vapours, pitching headlong into an abyss of horror.

Yet the child, though trembling ever and anon at the prospect before her, trusted in the sure instinct of her guide, and kept closely behind him.

Down dizzy steep—along the margin of slippery ledges, where one false step must have precipitated her to a fearful death, they passed in safety; and after an hour they reached the foot of the hill.

Here she paused, breathless.

Whither could she be wandering?

Where amid the storm could she expect to find a resting-place?

She gazed around her for a moment in bewilderment.

At length, on her right hand, some quarter of a mile up the valley, and immediately beneath the shelter of the ridge she had just passed, shone a light as from some large building.

"Joy, *Cesar*, joy!" cried the child, clapping her hands and patting the dog's neck. "There is our resting-place. Come!"

Here a new trouble beset her.

It was not so cold as on the hill top—the snow was not so frozen—but the wind which had lulled for a time now rose in violence, lifting the snow and tossing it in great drifts—now hurling it in masses against her slight form with a fierceness that nearly prostrated her; now raising it in cloud aloft, and a lowering it into her face and neck and eyes, piercing, stinging, blinding, like the points of millions of needles, and now rolling it up in great impassable ridges across her path. And over all was hung a pall of darkness so profound that, but for the guidance of that faithful dog, the frightful path could never have been traversed, nor that distant light reached.

But *Cesar* literally ploughed with his own body a

furrow through the snowdrifts for the child to walk in.

Their way now lay among the sparse and stunted evergreens that grew along the base of the ridge, and formed the outskirts of the valley forest.

Occasionally around the projections of the ridge, or behind a clump of intervening trees, the light would disappear; but by keeping along in the same direction, and close to the base of the hill, she could not lose sight of it entirely.

And, hark! that was the sound of a clock striking. It came from the direction of the buildings towards which she was toiling, and to which she was now very near.

The trees grew still more thinly, and now and then she caught sight of a collection of buildings, from the central one of which streamed many lights.

At length she emerged into an open space, and saw before her a high brick wall sweeping around and enclosing an extensive pile of masonry.

There was an iron gate in the wall before her, flanked with a small Gothic chapel on the right and a stone ledge on the left.

But both were quite dark.

"The lodge is closed," said the wanderer, with a sigh: "we must try the gate, Caesar."

Wild as was the tempest which howled and raged without, within the walls of the convent before which the child had sunk faint and weary, all was still and peaceful.

In the central building which formed the cloister proper, each nun and novice had retired to her separate cell, while in the young ladies' academy and the female orphans' home, conducted severally by Sister Agatha and Sister Helen, the fair pupils and the children were sleeping also.

On the first floor of the building—in the private room of the Lady Superior, there was more life and warmth.

It was a large, pleasant front room on the left-hand side of the entrance hall.

Just under the light of a chandelier of bronze stood a large, round, centre table, covered with a green cloth.

Around it sat half-a-dozen nuns engaged in fancy needlework, and before each one stood a little basket filled with scraps of silk, satin, velvet, lace, ribbon, bangles and other materials for the manufacture of articles to be sold for the benefit of the orphans.

They were busy and happy, talking and laughing as any other set of girls or women might do.

Opposite an old nun, who was sitting apart from the group, and on the right of the fireplace, sat the abbess.

She had been reading aloud.

But now her voice was hushed, her hands were lying listlessly on her lap, and her eyes were fixed on the fire.

She was thinking or listening.

Was she listening to the storm without or to the storm within her own heart?

No one could have gazed upon that woman without wondering what wayward destiny had brought her to that place.

She was apparently about twenty-eight years of age—of a tall, finely proportioned and commanding form.

Her every attitude in repose—every action when in motion, was full of dignity and grace.

She wore the severe habit of her order—the ample black gown with flowing sleeves girded around the waist; the white linen barrette fitting close as a frame around the face and under the chin and brought down and pinned square over the bosom; the broad black band across the upper part of the forehead and the long veil hiding everything but the face.

But that face!

You could not have looked upon it once, and ever after, in all the vicissitudes of life, have lost its haunting memory—that face with the pure oval outline and the pale olive complexion—with the deep mournfulness that veiled the dark impassioned eyes, and the rante eloquence that closed the full curved lips whose lightest tone, when open, thrilled you with its rich deep melody, for her voice was the luscious double contralto of a bosom vibrating with its own fulness of life, music, and emotion.

How came she there?

A creature endowed with such a glorious wealth of beauty, intellect, and feeling?

A being formed to inspire and respond to the purest, highest, and most fervent affection?

How had this woman, created to bless home and adorn society, missed her destiny, and fallen to this living death?

Beautiful and gifted—why was she lost to the world?

"Sisters," she cried, suddenly breaking from her reverie, "I think I heard the outer gate open—was it so?"

"Yes, dear mother, I fancy the wind has blown

it open," answered Sister Lucy. "Yes, hark!" she added, "the door-bell has rung!"

"Ah!" sighed the abbess, "it is no doubt some storm-driven traveller, who needs rest and supper. Go, Josephina, and see who is there."

The nun addressed left the room.

The others listened eagerly.

First came a slight noise of opening the door—then a rushing wind—then a short conversation, and then the entrance of Sister Josephina with the little girl and her huge dog.

The abbess glanced at the new comer with a strange look.

There was in her heart an unaccountable yearning towards her.

Why was it?

Why did her heart leap in her bosom?

The voice of sister Josephina came like a relief.

"It is a little girl, madam," she said, "who was on her way to Denby House."

"Poor child—a pretty one too!" said the abbess, with evident emotion, as she drew the little stranger towards her.

She was indeed a bright creature, as she stood there in the light of the glowing fire: her fine little form clad in a short cloak of scarlet cloth, embossed with frozen snow and icicles that shimmered and sparkled like some costly embroidery of Oriental pearls and diamonds.

The round hood of the cloak had fallen partly back, displaying a face bright with the beauty of childhood, health and joy, lighted up by a pair of brilliant hazel eyes, flushed with a carnation bloom on cheek and lips, and shaded by crispy, curling, bright round ringlets, sparkling with gems of frost, that a fairy princess might have envied.

CHAPTER II.

THE HEART'S MEMORIES.

Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Tennyson.

THE nuns felt the utmost surprise and curiosity as to the new comer, but as the abbess forbore to ask questions, they forbore also.

They busied themselves, however, in ministering to her comforts, and after dressing her in warm clothes, gave her some wine and cake.

Gladly would they have overwhelmed her with questions as to who she was, where she came from, and above all things, why she was abroad on such a bitter night; but they awaited respectfully for the moment when the abbess should feel inclined to speak to her.

At length, when she was warmed and fed, and sat in an easy-chair, with her feet towards the fire, the abbess inquired, gently:

"What is your name, my little girl?"

"Vieve."

"Vieve?"

"Yes—it is an odd name: my first name was Genevieve; but they gave me the other name for shortness."

"And where have you come from?"

"From Rensdon."

"You do not live there?"

"No, I only came there to-day. I have lived most of my life at the convent of St. Augustine."

The words sprang spasmodically from the white lips of the abbess, from whose suddenly sharpened features every vestige of colour had fled as she quickly crossed the room, took the hand of the astonished child and gazed into her face—her bosom was oppressed to suffocation—her voice choked—her eyes dimmed.

Suddenly, however, by a superhuman effort she regained her self-possession.

"My sisters," she said, "it grows late. I will take charge of this little one to-night. Come, Genevieve, with me."

She led the child away as she spoke—conducting her along a corridor, at the farther extremity of which was a chamber, furnished and appointed with every view to comfort.

Two low chairs stood near the blazing fire, which threw a cheering glow over the bright carpet—the white-curtained bed, and the window, whose drapery divided in the centre, fell gracefully around the little altar and crucifix.

"Sit down here, Genevieve," said the abbess, pointing to one of the chairs. "You are very tired, no doubt, and I will not keep you up. Here are some night-clothes. While you put them on, answer me a few questions. You have told me your Christian name, what is your surname?"

"Lenoir, madam."

"Lenoir!"

Again the abbess had nearly lost her self-possession.

"And that place you named?"

"St. Augustine."

"How came you here, then? And who sent you here to me this night—this night of all nights?"

"I was not coming to you, dear lady—I was going to Denby House."

"True—true!" said the abbess, with a shudder. "How the wind raves! What madness to send a child out in such a tempest!"

"There was no sign of a storm when I left Rensdon, to-day."

The abbess thought awhile.

Then she asked, suddenly:

"Tell me more about yourself, Vieve; where have you lived besides the Convent of St. Augustine?"

"St. Augustine's is the first place I recollect. I was very happy there. The nuns were very kind to me; and Father Peter—"

"Father Peter!"

"Yes, madam—he was the confessor. He was ordered to Ireland, and when he went he took me with him, and put me to school at the Convent of the Visitation in Fermanagh."

"How long did you stay there?"

"Nearly three years."

"And why did you leave it?"

"Because one day, while the flowers were still in bloom, Father Peter got a letter. It was so old, and had followed him about to so many places, and was so covered over with post-marks, that he could not tell where it came from till he opened it. Then he saw that it came from a gentleman in this country, who was very anxious to know if a little girl was dead or alive, and where she was, as he was growing old and ill, and wanted to see her before he died."

Father Peter said that I was the little girl he wanted."

"Who was the old gentleman?"

"His name is Denby—Colonel Denby, and he lives at Denby House."

"Colonel Denby!" exclaimed the abbess, as if in surprise, "but go on."

The child proceeded:

"Father Peter answered the letter directly, saying I was the little girl inquired about, and we came over at once; but poor Father Peter is very ill, and I was obliged to come over by myself to-day."

"Ill?"

"Yes—so ill, he can scarcely walk."

The abbess said no more, but gently aided the child in undressing.

Then she knelt and prayed with her, and having placed her in bed, soon saw her in a deep, sweet sleep.

She stood by the bedside, gazing as one in a trance upon the beautiful young sleeper, as she lay there with one dimpled arm doubled up under the flushed cheek, upon which the long dark eyelashes lay delicately pencilled, while the bright chestnut ringlets clustered thickly around the broad, fair forehead.

Long the abbess gazed.

Her emotion was evidently intense.

Her eyes flashed and sparkled, her face was pale, her nostrils dilated, her lips parched with the hot breath which escaped from her panting breast.

After gazing at the child awhile, she moved away to the window.

This she threw open, and gazed upon the night. The storm had now abated somewhat, and ever and anon the moon broke through the dark clouds.

On one side she could see the lofty hills which sheltered the convent—hills which in the summer were beautiful with a purple glow of wild blossoms, but which were now mantled in cold, white snow.

On the other hand stretched the valley, which in its monotony seemed interminable.

"The very brow—the very brow!" she murmured, as she gazed out. "Oh! if ever the divine seal was set upon a human forehead, it has been set upon that angel brow. Oh! Lenoir! Lenoir! All night shall I gaze upon that sweet face! May your sleep be deep, little one, that when I draw you to my throbbing breast, you may not feel the beating of my heart! And so he is ill at Rensdon—ill at Rensdon—so near, yet so far!—within my reach, and yet for ever beyond it! Did I think I was happy? Oh, fool! Misery—misery beyond computation!"

Almost frenzied was her look—with her corrugated brow and wild and gleaming eye, as in a distracted manner she tore the veil from her head, the robe from her shoulders, and threw herself on her knees.

Yet not before the crucifix.

It was by the bedside of the sleeping child she knelt—knelt not to pray, but to groan, and sob, and weep.

Long and bitterly she wept.

Sad, hopeless tears!

With cold and trembling hands she pushed those heavy masses of dark hair back from her burning forehead, and as the ribbon which confined them slipped off, those rich tresses fell and rolled, wave upon wave, in purple lustre over a neck and bosom white, polished, and beautifully moulded as the bust of the

Medicinal statue—a bosom not still like that marble, however, but fluttering and swelling with agonizing emotion.

The storm of grief raved itself into quietness at last.

She rose, bound her fugitive locks around her head, and throwing herself, only half undressed as she was, upon the bed, and supporting her throbbing brow upon her hand, she remained gazing on the features of the sleeping child, drinking in, as it were, to her thirsty heart an eternal memory of the face that had come to bless her vision for a night, to leave it for ever in the morning.

CHAPTER III.

THE COIL OF THE SNAKE.

How shocking must thy summons be, O Death!
To him that is at ease in his possessions:
Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,
Is quite unfurnished for the world to come!

Blair.

It was the dead time of night, and all was quiet.

The town of Haverton was sheltering itself from the storm.

Yet through it a man was pacing.

To be shelterless and friendless in the open country—to listen to the wind moaning and look in vain for a tree or a hay-rick for protection, are dismal things enough.

But it is worse to be wandering where shelter is, and beds and sleepers are by hundreds—a houseless, rejected creature.

To pace the echoing stones from hour to hour—counting the dull chimings of the clocks—to see lights in bedrooms—to think of the scenes those closed windows shut in—to have nothing in common with the slumbering world around, not even sleep—these are miseries on which the rivers of great cities close full many a time.

The miserable man paced up and down the streets of Haverton—so lone, so wearisome—so like each other, and often glanced at the East, as if hoping to see the first faint streaks of day.

One house in the suburbs of the town he revisited again and again.

There was a light in the windows, but there was a stillness as of death within it.

What was passing within that house?

Evidently something which affected the wanderer, for he gazed at it, as in his restless walk he recurred to it again and again—gazed at it with earnest eager eyes, and at last sat down on the doorstep.

"Oh, that I might enter! oh, that I might enter!" he murmured, as he sank down on the broad stones from which he had brushed the snow.

Then after a moment he rose and went away.

But he only paced round and round, and came back to the same spot and sat down.

This he did over and over, until the day began to break; and then, with a cry like a stricken deer, he turned and fled.

Why did he not enter?

What was passing within that house which seemed so full of terror, yet eager longing, for him?

In a large chamber a man lay upon the point of death.

The sick room was very still.

The heavy shutters and the massive curtains shut out all view and sound of the storm.

A thick Turkey carpet covered the floor, and stole all noises from the feet of her who glided through the chamber.

Even the clock on the mantel had been stopped, lest its ticking should arouse the sleeper.

The man who lay in that bed of death was white-haired and old.

He was Colonel Denby, of Denby House.

The woman who watched was young and fair.

She was Ida Denby, the widow of his youngest son.

She was exceedingly beautiful.

A beauty at once attractive and repulsive.

She was a pure albino, tall and slim, yet not thin, for her slender form and graceful limbs were beautifully rounded.

Her little head was cast in the Grecian mould—her features being small and regular and clearly cut.

It was a perfect face surrounded by light golden hair, rolling in soft waves over the temples and gathered in a graceful fall of ringlets over a comb at the back of her head.

Her eyes were so dark in their depths that at night you might have thought them black; but when you met them in the sunlight you saw that they were grey.

They had a basilisk's power in them.

Her hate was baleful—her love was fatal.

A woman she was without genius, without passions, yet not without appetites,—calm-blooded, cold-hearted, clear-headed, crafty, sensual, selfish and rapacious,

whose avarice and ambition were hungers rather than enthusiasms—whose power lay not in strength of intellect, but strength of will.

So the dying man and the watcher were together—the snake and the prey.

A slight noise from within the curtains attracted the notice of the soft-footed lady.

"Ida!"

"Dear father."

"Where are you—I cannot see you!"

"Here I am," she said, pushing aside the curtains.

"Ida—there came a letter—it is time now—they should be here now. How is it?"

"It was fancy—you were excited—you are better now."

"You think I am wandering. It is not so. I have dreamed a dream. I was amid the wild hills in the storm and the black darkness, and I was guiding a little child through the driving tempest. Oh! how we stepped and stumbled on those fearful brinks. I fancied it was poor Eustace's orphan child, and turning to clasp her to my heart, I awoke with sheer joy."

"Your nerves have been much excited, dear sir," said the low-voiced lady.

Then she glided away to an ebony stand on which stood a shaded taper, and poured a dark liquid from a phial into a glass.

Returning, she said:

"Take this sedative."

"I will not take it. It would benumb my faculties, and I want them all now."

"Do take it, sir; it will ease you, and after your sleep you will wake brighter than ever."

"No, no, Ida, I will not take it. I will not sleep again till I have done justice to that poor child."

"Oh, dear sir, be contented. The poor child is dead."

"We do not know that. I had no right to take it for granted, Ida. Ring the bell!"

"What is it you want?"

"Go and rouse one of the men; let him take the fleetest horse in the stable, and fetch Mr. Hudson hither to-night. Be quick, for my strength is failing!"

"Father, it is past midnight, and an awful storm rages."

"It cannot be helped. Dick must go. Many a man has ridden through a worse tempest than this."

"But father—"

"Let him tell Mr. Hudson to name his own terms; but come."

"The river is flooded, sir; we are hemmed in for the night."

The dying man groaned.

"Is it so?" he murmured. "Oh, Eustace, must your child be a beggar as well as an orphan?"

"Dear sir, believe me, the child is dead," persisted Ida; "these doubts are but the results of a fevered brain: take this draught, and a calm sleep will refresh you."

"No, no; I wish no unconscious death."

"You are not near death, father."

"Yes—yes I am; but say, Ida, do you think she is in heaven?"

"I feel sure of it."

"Oh, could I but think it!"

"Believe it, sir; but believe also that, if she be still on earth, your verbal wish shall be carried out as implicitly as if it had been written."

"You promise, then, to befriend the orphan child if she be found?" murmured the dying man, wearily.

"Yes; I swear it."

"Ah! who is like my Ida?" he whispered, like one about to sink to sleep.

She glided her arm round his neck, and presented to him the opiate.

"You woke in a fright just now; your nerves were agitated," she said; "take this for my sake."

He mechanically obeyed her, and fell back into a deep sleep.

She sat down quietly.

An hour passed.

The dying man roused again.

"Ida! Ida! have you sent off for the lawyer? Quick, or it will be too late."

Again she was at his side.

"Yes; I have sent. Drink this: it will give you strength for the interview."

And ere he was well awake, the sufferer had drunk again, and once more relapsed into a heavy sleep.

"How often will this have to be repeated?" murmured the watcher. "If he wakes again I will double the dose."

Again and again was the scene enacted.

It was a fearful night without.

How the wind roared and shrieked, and howled round the house; shaking the strong roof and thick walls as if they had been the belongings of a hut!

It was a fearful night within too, with the starts and panics of the dying man in his remorse, and the fell watcher with her deadly narcotics.

The night waned.

Without, the storm had lulled.

Within, the man was lying in a dull lethargy.

Even the watcher slept.

A stealthy step crept into the room.

"The doctor is below, ma'am. Shall I show him up?"

The woman, after helping her mistress to arrange her toilet, departed to usher up the doctor.

Ida opened the shutters and let in a flood of sunlight.

"Good morning, Mrs. Denby!" said the physician, in a low voice, as he entered.

He was a fine looking man, tall, well-proportioned, with dark brilliant eyes and black hair.

The lady smiled, as she almost whispered:

"Good morning, Dr. Robertson."

The doctor eyed the patient a moment.

"Has he slept?"

"Badly—he has had many starts and nervous fits."

"You gave him the composing draught regularly, let me hope?"

"Yes: at first, however, it produced but a temporary effect."

The doctor examined his patient again.

Then he sat down and wrote a prescription.

This he handed to Ida.

"If," he said, "the colonel is worse when he wakes, and should exhibit any symptoms similar to those he showed during the night, give him this mixture, according to these written directions. Pray give yourself some rest, lady. Good day!"

He left the room.

The lady touched the bell.

Her maid entered.

"Sarah," cried Ida, "admit no soul—man, woman, or child—into the house to-day. Let none of the servants come up-stairs on any pretext whatever. The noise will disturb their master."

"Very good, ma'am."

"And now serve my breakfast in the next room."

The woman left the room to fulfil the directions given her.

In a few moments the lady passed into the room where her meal was prepared.

She sat down in silence.

Scarcely, however, had she tasted her tea when a sound was heard proceeding from the next room.

It came from the room of the patient—a heavy, laboured breathing—a struggle, and then the death-rattle.

Ida started from her almost untasted meal, and hastened into the chamber of death.

There was no fear of interference now.

His sufferings were well-nigh over—he was in his last agony.

The purple shadows of death had settled in the hollows of the cheeks and temples—the cold dew of death had beaded on the pallid forehead—the film of death had come over the fixed eyes.

She drew near and gazed upon those mortal throes with a steady eye and an unchanging cheek, and wiped the clammy moisture from the cold brow and lips, and took the poor wrist in her hands, and, with her fingers on the pulse, watched the ebbing tide of life, as it beat slowly and more slowly, till it ceased for ever.

Yes—it did cease.

The long struggle was over—the battle was fought and won; she could venture to sleep now.

The one victory was gained, but the question was, would all the battles in her life's campaign be victories for her also?

(To be continued.)

ALL the little army of the ex-Duke of Modena will shortly be en route for Mexico.

It is probable that the Mackay gun will be removed, at the request of the Government, to Woolwich for trial. No doubt the officials there will do all in their power to burst it, and so cast discredit on the gun. We believe that Mr. Mackay is having a 12-pounder gun made.

THE PRUSSIAN LOSSES IN THE LATE CAMPAIGN.—The total loss of the Prussian troops during the late campaign is calculated from official sources at 116 officers, 218 sub-officers, 46 bandsmen, and 1,592 privates killed and wounded, with 9 officers and 117 sub-officers, bandsmen, and privates taken prisoners. More than half the latter are cavalry, the 8th Hussars, in particular having contributed a large proportion. Five of the captured officers and many of the men are included in the number of the wounded. Twenty-eight officers were killed in action or died immediately after of their wounds, consisting of 1 major-general (Von Raven), 2 majors (Von Jena and Von Keeren), 3 captains, 4 first lieutenants, and 18 second lieutenants. The total Prussian loss may be broadly estimated at 128 officers and about 1,800 men.

THE ORDER OF THE GARTER.—The *Gazette* contains an order from the sovereign appointing the Duke of Sutherland and the Marquis of Albury to be Knights of the Garter, and dispensing with the ceremonies attendant on the usual mode of installation. The *comité d'élire* is also issued for the appointment of Dr. Jeune to be Bishop of Peterborough.

IRISH COTTON.—Mr. Benjamin Whitworth, one of the wealthiest merchants of Manchester, has taken the first step to introduce the manufacture of cotton in Ireland, by laying the foundation of a cotton factory at Drogheda. His object is to stop the tide of Irish emigration, and give the people of that country a good day's wages for a good day's work. He is also going to erect a "Whitworth Hall," at a cost of £3,000.

THE SECRET CHAMBER.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The boat touched the strand, the men sprang on shore, and, in spite of her struggles, Vernor raised Ethel in his arms, dashed through the surf, and placed her in the stern, half paralyzed by fright. In another instant they were floating in deep water; and as Alice reached the edge of the shore, wringing her hands and calling on them to return, Vernor arose, exultingly waving his hat to her, and cried out:

"Tell Sir Gerald Methurn that Lady Clifton has gone with her husband, and I defy him to tear her from me again. Farewell, Miss Digby! you will see your friend no more, or you will see her as my willing wife."

The sailors bent to their oars and rowed rapidly toward the projecting point which concealed the lugger, but as they drew near it a sudden roar of fire-arms, which startled them, was heard. The deep boom of a cannon followed, succeeded by rapid discharges of musketry, and with an imprecation Vernor exclaimed:

"The cutter is on our track. She has found out whether the lugger came, and has followed her. This is a cursed chance, and may ruin all my plans. Pull with a will, boys, till we get into the light below this. There we shall be safe, and I will take care that the lady makes no noise."

Ethel wore a long scarf around her throat, and he wrapped it over her mouth and knotted it at the back of her head in such a manner as effectually to prevent her from screaming. She was passive in his hands, for in the deadly terror that fell on her she seemed to lose all power of resistance.

The sailors, fearful of the fate that might await them if taken by the revenue cutter, rowed rapidly round the headland and entered a narrow stream which flowed beyond it into the sea. Once in this, they knew they were safe, for the beetling crags nearly met overhead, and the water was too shallow to permit a successful pursuit.

The noise of the conflict continued, and just as they were gaining their place of refuge, the smoke in which the combatants were was lifted, and they obtained a glimpse of two vessels engaged in deadly strife. When the boat was safely moved, one of the sailors scrambled up the precipitous bank to a point from which he could see the fight.

For the space of twenty minutes the smuggler was fiercely defended; she then attempted to sheer off, but the revenue cutter intercepted her, and nothing was left but to surrender to the superior force of the king's vessel. The flag was struck, and the prize was grappled to the side of the conqueror, which sailed away in the direction of Lyme. The man came down to his companions with a rueful visage.

"It's all up with us," he said. "The poor old craft is taken, and we must do the best we can for ourselves."

Vernor uttered a volley of curses, and presently said:

"We can't stay here. The country will be alarmed, and people will soon be on our track for doing what will be thought worse than smuggling. Get out of this place, and move cautiously down the coast. Ten miles below here there is a place where we can land in safety. I will give you ten pounds to take me there with this lady; from the coast I can easily reach a place of security for both her and myself."

Ten pounds was a large sum to these men, and one of them cheerfully answered:

"Ay—ay, sir. We'll help you out of the scrape, and you shall keep your wife. A dutiful one she must be, to refuse to go with you, at any rate."

Ethel struggled to speak, but Vernor placed his hand over her mouth and commanded her to be silent.

When the boat reached the open sea they saw the cutter receding in the distance, and in a little while she was lost to view. There was little wind; but what there was, was favourable to their progress, and after a few hours of steady rowing they came in sight of a solitary house standing upon the beach.

Fishing nets were spread upon the sand to dry, and Vernor, who knew the place well, desired the sailors to land him there. The head of the boat was turned towards the shore, and Ethel was lifted in Vernor's arms and placed upon the strand. The sum agreed on was paid to the men, who declared their intention to seek the smuggler's cove and, if possible, learn the fate of their late companions.

After taking leave of them, Vernor led Ethel to the door of the cabin and placed her on a bench in front of it, while he went in and called aloud to the owner of the premises. But the fisherman was not at home, and after deliberating a moment he rejoined Ethel and said:

"I know of old that you are a good walker, and five miles will not fatigue you. Come with me to the Priory; I know every step of the way there, and I mean to take possession and install you as mistress in the halls of my father. Gerald shall no longer have everything his own way. I am free from the pursuit of Sylvie Menard, for she has committed suicide; so make up your mind to come with me at once."

To the Priory! There was some hope in that, for there she must find friends who would protect her from Vernor till she could be rescued. He removed the scarf from her mouth, and more gently said:

"I do not wish to treat you ill, Ethel; but this was the last chance left me to regain you. As soon as I heard of Sylvie's fate I was resolved that Gerald should not take you from me. Come, let us lose no time, for the sun is sinking, and we shall barely have time to gain the Priory before night comes on."

Ethel made no reply; she felt that words would be useless, but she endeavoured to collect all her energies that she might be ready to avail herself of any chance of escape that offered itself.

Vernor again entered the hut, looked around for some means of striking a light, and took possession of the lantern and tinder-box used by the fisherman, for which he left a piece of money. When he came out with them Ethel asked:

"What use will you have for those?"

"Oh, if we should be beighted in the woods they may be of use to us. I know the old fisherman well, and I have left something to pay for what I have taken. Will you take my arm? You had better, for you will find the path rough in places."

She shrank away:

"I can go alone; walk on, and I will follow you."

"Understand one thing, Ethel," he said, with a tone of savage earnestness in his voice—"if you make an effort to get away from me, I shall no longer play the courteous gentleman to you. If I can win you by fair means I am willing to try them; but if not, you may take the consequences."

A bitter retort sprang to the gentle lips of Ethel, but she repressed it and said:

"I will follow you, as I said before. Keep your threats for me till I have attempted to escape."

Leaving the beach, he strode on through a tangled pathway that led into a narrow road which wound through the thick forest. It bore few evidences of travel, and seemed to have been rudely cut by the lonely fisherman to facilitate his access to some neighbouring market.

Vernor had often threaded its mazes in other days, and he knew that there was little chance of encountering any one in their progress. Like most of her countrywomen, Ethel was accustomed to take long walks nearly every day of her life, and although she followed her ruthless guide with a fainting heart and unwilling steps, she easily kept up with him, the latent hope sustaining her that once at the Priory she would find those who would be both able and willing to protect her.

Why Vernor should venture to take her there she could not fathom: she supposed that it was his intention to hold her in a species of honourable captivity while he endeavoured to win back the affections he had lost. She felt this to be a vain hope on his part, and when once convinced of its futility he would surely release her.

Boyed up by this forlorn hope, she walked on in silence, meeting no one on their route to whom she could have appealed for assistance, and she gladly saw the old familiar woodland appear in sight.

The sun was setting, and his last rays glistened on the moss-covered walls of the venerable pile as Vernor unlocked a gate which led toward the rear of the most ancient portion of the building. Ethel then asked:

"What is your purpose in bringing me hither?"

"You will soon learn," was the brief response; and taking her arm firmly in his own, he led the way to the decaying door which opened into the vaults. He stopped in front of it, and by a dexterous movement threw the scarf he had before used over her face, and in spite of her struggles and faint cries for help, secured it in such a manner as to prevent her from seeing whither he was about to take her. Then lifting

her in his arms, he carried her through the opening and placed her on a pile of fallen stones, half senseless with fright and surprise. He imperiously said:

"Don't attempt to take that bandage off, for if you do, I will not answer for myself. I may take your life as the punishment of your disobedience. Sit still, and do not utter a cry, I command you; but if you should, there is no one to hear you in this lonely place."

He rapidly lighted his lantern, threw his arm around the unresisting form of Ethel, and finding that she had fainted, he muttered:

"So much the better; I can now take her to her prison without her knowing anything about the way we came."

Her light weight was not much encumbrance, and he rapidly threaded his way toward the Secret Chamber. He gained it, sought and found the spring, and conveyed her to the upper room. It was exactly as it had been left years before; and throwing aside the heavy hangings of the bed, Vernor placed his insensible burden upon it.

Ethel again awoke to consciousness to find her captor standing over her, holding his lantern so that its light fell upon her pallid face, from which he had removed the scarf. She started up, exclaiming:

"Where am I? Oh, Vernor, where have you brought me? You can never be so cruel as to immerse me in such a place as this?"

"It is my fixed purpose to shut you up here till you come to your senses. The existence of this room is unknown to any one but myself, and you may die in its darkness unless you consent to leave it as my obedient wife. You shall never go from it except under a solemn pledge to remain true to the vows you have plighted to me, to the last hour of your life."

A faint wail of anguish broke from her lips; she started up, threw herself before him, and imploringly said:

"Be human—be merciful, Vernor. I have never injured you. I will give you what you may demand from my fortune as the price of my freedom. Vernor, I shall die in this desolate place, and you will not be the better for what I possess."

"I will see you die by inches sooner than I will permit you to give yourself to Gerald. I hate him, and I will thwart him at all hazards. He thought to trample on all my rights, but I have outwitted him. He shall never see you again, except as my wife; so the sooner you make up your mind to accept my terms the better it will be for you."

She arose, defiant and scornful:

"I will never accept them! I will perish first!"

"Ho! ho! will you indeed?" he sneered. "Let me tell you what you will have to bear. For three days I will furnish you with light; after that, if you are still obstinate, I will see what darkness will accomplish toward bending your stubborn will. Your food shall be bread and water, and perhaps your dainty palate will soon find such a nourishment unpalatable. The sooner the better for my purpose. No human being will ever be able to discover your prison, and I shall keep myself where Gerald cannot find me. Ha, my pretty lady-bird! I have snared you at last, and placed you in a cage so strong that there is no possibility of breaking from it."

She listened to him in silent despair; but even at that moment a ray of faith darted into her trusting soul, and she firmly said:

"Man's help may fail me, but God's will not; He will send deliverance to me from your cruel abuse of power."

Vernor laughed mockingly.

"Say your prayers as much as you will—I have no objection; but if you ask to be delivered from this place without my agency, it is my belief that your Deity will be deaf to them. I must leave you to solitude and darkness now. I am as hungry as a wolf, and you must wait food yourself. I will return with your allowance of bread and water as soon as possible, and then I will leave you a light."

Without further ceremony he stepped through the trap-door, closed and bolted it behind him, leaving Ethel standing in the dense darkness of the subterranean chamber.

Feeling faint and worn out by all she had gone through that day, she felt her way to the bed, and sat down upon it, trembling with fear.

She tried to collect her thoughts—to form some plan of action in this terrible crisis of her life; but the palpable darkness that seemed to fold around her as the mantle of oblivion scared away the power of thought.

Ethel was as little superstitious as most people were at that day, but she was young and sensitive. She had never before been left alone in darkness in her life, and her heart died with her as she thought that she was cut off from human sympathy; left to the mercy of a man who so deeply resented her indiffer-

ence that he might be capable of punishing her even with death if she persisted in refusing to comply with his demands.

Vernor was absent about three hours, during which time the poor captive endured all the agonies which fear and despair could inflict.

When he returned he merely unclosed the trap, and thrust through it several wax candles, one of which was in a tin candle-stick and already lighted. He placed beside them a loaf of bread, a pitcher filled with water, and mockingly said:

"I leave you to do penance for your faithlessness to the vows you have taken. This is your home—with your fare as long as you live, if you refuse obedience to me. Good night, my pretty one. Dream of me—think of me: love me, for that is your only chance of escape."

With a sinking heart Ethel heard the bolts shot that fastened her in that terrible place, and throwing herself upon her knees beside the bed, she sobbed out a prayer for mercy and deliverance: even amid her present desolation she felt the consoling assurance that it would be heard and responded to, and she arose calmed and capable of thought.

The superstitious dread which had overwhelmed her in the darkness now passed away, and she examined the prison in which she was immured only to discover how hopeless were the chances of escape through any effort of her own.

She knew that Gerald would leave no means untried to discover her place of detention, but how was it possible for him to find her in this secluded dungeon, the very existence of which Vernor had assured her was known only to himself?

At length, exhausted by the fatigues and emotions of the day, she threw herself upon the bed, and fell into a feverish and broken slumber.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ALICE, after witnessing the daring abduction of her friend, fled rapidly towards the house, and gave the alarm to the family.

A messenger was despatched in hot haste to bring Gerald back, and a group soon collected on the sands, but there was no sign of the boat in which Ethel had been conveyed away.

The sounds of the conflict between the two vessels reached their ears, and Mr. Digby ordered a barge which was kept some distance above, to be brought down as soon as possible.

By the time it arrived, and he was rowed far enough from the shore to obtain a view of the combatants, the fight was nearly over, and in a few more moments, the cutter moved slowly away, carrying her late antagonist with her as prize.

He saw that it would be hopeless to attempt to overtake her, and he returned to the group upon the shore, with the consoling assurance that if Vernor had taken refuge on the lugger, he was now a prisoner, and Ethel under the protection of its captain, who was known to him as a humane and courteous man.

With their fears a little allayed by this belief, Mrs. Digby and Alice returned to the house, and Mr. Digby only awaited the return of Gerald to set out with him for Lyme to inquire into Ethel's fate.

An hour had scarcely elapsed, when Gerald rushed in, pale with anguish; the messenger had overtaken him a few miles from Clifden, and he returned at a fearful rate of speed, to learn the slight ground of hope, that Vernor had taken his prize on board the captured lugger.

"I trust in God it may prove so," he hoarsely said. "We must go to Lyme at once, and learn if she is there. If not, I will search the world over for her, and never rest till I have brought condign punishment to him who dared thus to outrage every principle of honour and justice."

The horses had already been ordered, and the two gentlemen set out without delay, leaving Bertie, who had also returned, to console Mrs. Digby and Alice.

Gerald's impatience soon outstripped the pace at which his older companion was accustomed to ride, and waving his hand to him, he set off at a furious gallop, as he said:

"Come on, and meet me at Lyme, but on such a quest as this, I must ride by my life."

With headlong speed, he dashed over hill and valley, and it was fortunate both for himself and the horse he rode, that the last was thorough-bred, and accustomed to follow the hounds at a break-neck pace. The noble animal sped away as if animated by the spirit of his rider, and in a few hours he had passed over a space which lay between Clifden and Lyme.

When Gerald came in sight of the town, he slackened his pace, and looked anxiously toward the pier. The cutter was already there, and dismounting, he secured the bridle of his panting steed to a tree, and descended through a rocky ravine to the landing-place. A group of people had collected, through which he made his eager way, and inquired for the

captain of the vessel. A bluff, good-humoured looking man came forward, and Gerald took him aside and inquired if there was a lady on board of the lugger when she was taken. The officer looked surprised, and said:

"I found only a few men, sir. I don't think the skipper smuggles ladies as well as other contraband articles."

"A lady has been seized and carried from her home by force, and there is every reason to believe that the lugger was waiting to receive her on board. Can I see her captain?"

"If he will receive you; but he is wounded and rather sulky."

After some delay, Gerald was admitted into the cabin where the wounded man lay. At first he obstinately refused to reply to his questions, but when he informed him who he was, and assured him that he would use his influence to obtain a mitigation of his punishment if he would give the information he sought, Tompkins stated to him that, as soon as he had obeyed Vernor's signal and made ready to sail, the cutter which had been lying in wait for him had commenced the attack, Vernor was unable to get on board, and he had doubtless landed on the coast and made his way into the interior of a country that was familiar to him from boyhood.

This was all Gerald could learn, and when he stepped upon the pier again, he paused a moment and addressed the crowd:

"Lady Clifden has been torn from her home by violence, and I offer a hundred pounds to any one who will discover her place of concealment, and communicate it to me. Between Clifden and this place her abductor must have turned, and I will give a similar reward for any information concerning Vernor Methurn, who has perpetrated this outrage. I go now to seek him myself, but I hope, my friends, that you will zealously aid me in the search."

A confused murmur arose in reply, but he did not pause to hear or answer questions. Rapidly ascending the bank, he again mounted his faithful steed, and spurred back on the road on which he had come. He met Mr. Digby, and rapidly related his failure to trace Ethel, and they took separate roads to arouse the country in pursuit of her captor.

The news of what had occurred at Clifden soon spread through Lyme; it was repeated in Jessie Lithgow's shop, and thus reached Minchen. Her plans were rapidly formed, and as much of them communicated to Sylvie as she considered necessary to their successful accomplishment. She was hourly expecting Melchoir, from whom she had heard; his injured foot was well enough to enable him to travel, and his messenger had said he would be with her by sunset.

The gipsy went out and hired a covered cart, which she ordered to await her in a ravine near to town.

As Melchoir was often in the habit of making mysterious journeys with the contraband articles in which he dealt, this did not excite any surprise in the man from whom the vehicle was obtained; and when Melchoir came back with the news which had hastened his return, he found everything in readiness for a speedy departure.

Sylvie, moving like one in a terrible dream, mechanically obeyed the directions given her. She was assured that she should see Vernor once more—should speak with him; and the wild glare in her eyes revealed to the subtle observation of the gipsy the fierce fires that lay smouldering beneath her apparent docility.

When supper was over, the three silently evaded the observation of their hostess, and issued from a rear entrance leading toward the open country. After a walk of half a mile, they gained the ravine in which the cart awaited them.

Melchoir took the reins, and dismissed the man in charge of it with the assurance that he should return in a few days.

The two women took their places, and they set out over the rugged road which led to the Priory.

Minchen's attentiveness had assured her that, in such an extremity, Vernor would make use of the Secret Chamber to conceal Ethel from everyone till an opportunity offered to escape with her to the continent. He was ignorant of the vicinity of herself and her son, and would, therefore, feel secure of keeping his prisoner as long as was necessary to his plans without being interfered with by any one.

She exchanged exulting whispers with her son; but both were careful that they should not reach the ears of Sylvie, who lay supine in the bottom of the cart wrapped in shawls which Melchoir had brought with him for that purpose.

The night was clear but not very cold; the road was uneven, and in some places almost impassable, and the sun was rising when they reached the beech wood in which their encampment had formerly been erected.

Accustomed to such exigencies, the gipsy had brought with her a supply of food and the means of striking a light.

A fire was soon kindled, over which wine was mulled for Sylvie, into which the old woman slyly poured a few drops of transparent liquid from a phial she drew from her bosom.

"This will fire her blood," she muttered, "and make her more reckless than she naturally is. If she does not kill him I will do it myself, for he shall never escape me now."

Sylvie ate but little of the food that was offered her, for she had no appetite; but she eagerly drank every drop of the wine prepared for her, and a few moments afterward impatiently asked:

"What are we to do next? The traitor is not here, and you promised that I should find him at the end of my journey."

"So you shall. We are on his track, and a few moments more will bring you where he will be sure to come very soon, if we do not actually find him there."

"Let us go, then. Every moment that detains me from my vengeance only sharpens my desire to reach his false and perjured heart."

The two confederates exchanged significant glances, and Melchoir prepared to conceal the cart and horse in the recesses of a neighbouring thicket. Then, striking into a sheltered pathway which led toward the opening in the vaults they skirted the lawn, and gained the place they sought without observation from the house.

Melchoir carried a lantern already lighted, and, after reconnoitring a few moments to satisfy himself that Vernor was nowhere near, he entered the gloomy subterranean vaults, followed by the two women. In silence they threaded their way to the secret chamber: with dilating eyes Sylvie saw the door spring back, and she asked, with some apprehension:

"Why should you bring me here? Vernor would not voluntarily seek such a place as this."

"Not for himself, perhaps; but he has brought her of whom I told you hither, to conceal her from her friends till she consents to receive him as her husband."

Sylvie uttered a cry that sounded more like the voice of some wild animal than the tones of a human voice. She pantingly said:

"My rival—my rival is there. Let me immolate her, and then Vernor and I may be happy."

She sprang through the opening with a bound like that of an enraged tigress, and glared around the empty room with her hand upon the handle of her poignard. Minchen firmly grasped her arm, and, looking into her blazing eyes, sternly said:

"This young girl is innocent of wrong toward you, and I will not conduct you to her presence unless you pledge me your word that you will make no attempt to injure her. It is my purpose to remove her and restore her to her friends, leaving you in her place to avenge your injuries on him who will come here expecting to find her. You must promise me this, or we return as we came, and you may find Vernor as you can."

Her look subdued Sylvie with its magnetic power, and she feebly said:

"Let me look on her, then. I will not attempt to strike at the heart which has desolated mine. To see Vernor once more I will promise anything—anything."

Whispering a few words to her son to guard Ethel from any sudden impulse of fury from the half-maddened woman beside her, Minchen closed the aperture and ascended the stairs, followed by the others.

The noise of their approach did not arouse Ethel from the troubled slumber into which she had fallen; she had placed her candle upon a tall stand, and its rays fell upon her pale yet lovely face, around which lay the heavy rings of her brown hair.

Minchen placed her finger upon her lip, and drew near the bed, followed by Sylvie, who glared upon that sweet face with an expression of dire hatred. She saw that it was beautiful; she believed that Vernor loved its possessor, and, in a paroxysm of jealous fury, she snatched her fatal dagger from her bosom, raised it aloft, and was about to strike her rival to the heart, when the watchful Melchoir sprang upon her and pinioned her arms to her sides. She cried out:

"Let me strike her—let me strike her—for she is my most deadly foe!"

At the noise thus made Ethel sprang up in wild alarm, and for an instant she could not remember where she was, or what had happened to her; but all came back to her in a moment, and she imagined those were the emissaries of Vernor come to tear her from her native land. She threw herself before Minchen and implored:

"If you have a human heart, remove me from this place; take me from the power of a bad man, who has fatally entrapped me. He has sent you hither to do I

know not what; but as you hope for mercy yourself show it to me now."

The gipsy raised her up, and gently said:

"My son and I have followed you hither, Lady Clifton, to rescue and restore you to your friends. We are not the agents of Mr. Methurn, but the friends of his deserted wife, who now stands before you."

Ethel seized her hands, and pressed them to her heart, while she uttered incoherent thanks for this assurance. After a few moments, she more calmly said:

"God has heard my prayers, and sent you to rescue me from the dreadful doom Vernor would have given me. Let us go—let us go before he returns, for he may come back at any moment."

She started forward, as if to leave the chamber; but Sylvie, who still panted and struggled in Melchoir's strong grasp, cried out:

"Let me look on her; let me see the fatal beauty that won his heart from me—from me, who gave him all I had to give, only to be trampled on and deserted for her sake."

Thus arrested, Ethel turned toward her; and although she shrank from the maniac glare in Sylvie's eyes, she gently addressed the excited creature:

"If Vernor has led you to believe that he loves me, he has spoken falsely; he cares nothing for me beyond my power to advance his interests. He had pledged his word to me to seek you, and endeavour to make his peace with you; he promised me that he would legalize your claim on him as soon as the power to do so is his. He violated his word, and tore me from my home to immure me here. Take my place, and when he returns let the affection you have once cherished for each other bring about a reconciliation between you. I only wish for your happiness together, for I love, and have long been betrothed to his cousin."

While she thus spoke, the fire faded from the eyes of Sylvie, and she softly said:

"Pass on, sweet vision of gentleness and purity; I would not harm you now. You can release me, Melchoir; she is safe from me, since she refuses to return Vernor's love."

The gipsy relaxed his grasp, and Sylvie stood free. She returned the dagger to its sheath, and, exhausted by her own violence, threw herself upon the bed. Minchen spoke to Ethel:

"Go now with my son. He will conduct you to the inhabited part of the house, and place you under the care of the agent who lives in it. A message will be sent at once to Clifton, to inform the family of your safety."

Ethel gladly prepared to obey; she took the hand of Minchen in both her own, and said:

"I shall see you again. This service shall be nobly rewarded, for to you I owe more than life."

"If one good deed can balance many evil ones, Lady Clifton, I shall be happy. Go, now; for the day wears on, and he you wot of may return."

Melchoir took up his lantern and descended the staircase, followed by the trembling Ethel, who scarcely yet believed in the reality of her release. He closed the lower door behind them, and walked rapidly toward the opening upon the park, not without some fear that he should encounter Vernor upon his path, and ready for a deadly encounter with him should he approach; but they reached the door in safety, and with a glad sense of release from her terrible thrall, Ethel beheld the light of day, and inhaled the invigorating morning air.

Her spirit arose in a glad psalm of thanks for her deliverance, though her lips uttered no audible sound. The two met with no one in their progress to the front entrance, and great was the astonishment of Mr. Weston, the agent for the estate, to see Lady Clifton, whom he knew well, enter the house, attended by her stalwart companion. Melchoir detained her near the door while he said, in a low voice:

"You are now safe, Lady Clifton, and I must return to my mother. But I beg, as the reward of the service I have rendered you, that, until Sir Gerald Methurn comes, you will say nothing of the place from which you came. Its existence is a family secret that should be respected."

She readily gave the promise, and Melchoir departed.

Requesting a private interview with Mr. Weston, Ethel informed him that she had been treacherously taken from her home, and desired him to despatch a messenger to Clifton as speedily as possible, to inform the family of her safety, and to request them to come to the Priory without delay.

Her presence there, for reasons of vital importance, she wished concealed till her friends again surrounded her. Though in a state of extreme bewilderment as to what had really happened to her, the agent made every arrangement for her security; she again took possession of her old apartment, and locking herself in, hastened to return thanks for her great deliverance.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

VERNOR took refuge in the cabin of a poacher, who had been well known to him in other days. The man recognized him at once, and remembering the former immunity extended to him by the young heir of the Priory, consented to serve him to the best of his ability in his present fallen state.

He represented himself as in danger of arrest for his premature return to England, and offered a reward to the peasant to obtain such articles for him as would enable him to conceal himself in the vaults beneath the Priory for a season, till an opportunity for escape was afforded.

Through the agency of this man he obtained the articles he had conveyed to Ethel in her dreary prison, and then he set out to retrace his steps to the fisherman's hut. He found Jenkins there, and after taking a few hours of repose, he despatched him to a small village on the coast below to make arrangements with the captain of any vessel that traded to it to take himself and Ethel from England, as soon as possible; for in spite of his threats to her, he fully intended to remove her from her prison as soon as he could find the means of escaping to France.

Jenkins returned at a late hour of the day, with the information that a schooner was lying before the village receiving her cargo for Havre, and that she would sail at dawn on the following morning. For the sum the fisherman was authorized to offer him, the captain of the schooner agreed to sail up the coast a few miles, and lie off a point which was easily accessible from the Priory, till his passengers came on board.

Everything thus arranged to his satisfaction, Vernor again set out for his old home. The sun was setting when he came in sight of the pile, and wondering if he should find Ethel in a more submissive mood, he hastily threaded his way towards the concealed door. He muttered:

"Ethel must be pretty well scared by this time, and she will consent to anything sooner than remain another twenty-four hours in that dark hole. It was a terrible ordeal for a young girl like her, but it will bring her to her senses. I shall surely find her ready to supplicate for release on my own terms."

With this agreeable anticipation he moved rapidly forward, unconscious that every step he made was watched by malignant eyes. Melchoir awaited Vernor's arrival concealed in an obscure angle of the wall, and he saw him walk to his doom with the triumphant certainty that his long-delayed vengeance would soon be completed.

Vernor left the door of the lower chamber unclosed, and his evil fate watched him as he ascended the staircase and opened the trap-door. A flood of light fell through it which dazzled the eyes of the new comer, and he looked upon the scene presented stupefied with amazement and dread.

The same preparations had been made for his reception which once before greeted Sir Hugh. The hangings were drawn aside, and the stone sarcophagus, covered with a velvet pall on which the arms of the Methurns were embroidered, was displayed to view. The table that was placed in front of it bore several lights, and the worn books Vernor had once before seen, but which had so mysteriously disappeared, were placed upon it.

The curtains of the bed were closely drawn, and a dark-robed figure, whose features were concealed by a shrouding black veil, sat at the head of the sarcophagus.

Vernor's brain reeled, his feet seemed chained to the floor, and for a few seconds his voice refused to utter any articulate sound. Then he furiously cried:

"Who are you? What does this mummery mean?"

Minchen slowly arose, and spoke in low, meaning tones:

"I am the minister of fate. Your doom is spoken, and your crimes are about to be expiated."

Vernor recognized her voice, and sprang angrily toward her.

"Is it you, wretch? You have kept upon my track and baffled me in everything I have undertaken. What have you done with her I left here? Where is my wife?"

Minchen pointed to the bed and said:

"She lies there in a slumber produced by my art. She will awake only at my touch, and I have thrown her into this trance that you and I may exchange a few words together before she is aroused. She will never awake again unless my power bids her do so, so beware how you attempt to injure me."

She stood in front of the bed, with her arms outstretched as if to shield it from his approach, and Vernor stopped, appalled. While travelling in Spain, he had witnessed the effect of the mysterious power wielded by a gipsy who had the reputation of being an enchanter, and he knew that among that strange people an artificial sleep could be produced, so profound as to defy the efforts of any one but him who had produced it to arouse the slumberer.

He recoiled before the weird form that confronted him, and sternly said:

"Speak! what have you to say? Name your terms for permitting me to remove my wife alive and well, and I promise to abide by them."

She laughed scornfully.

"Have you ever abided by a contract yet, guilty son of a perjured father? Look upon the name embroidered on yonder pall—did I not once promise you that when you gave the same fate to your wife, which was awarded to her who perished in this room, I would reveal to you all its mysteries? Read for yourself, and learn them now."

Vernor turned at her command, and his eyes rested on the name of his mother. His face blanched—his hair arose upon his head, as he wildly said:

"My mother there! Impossible! Sir Hugh could not—could not be so cruel!"

In a cold tone Minchen replied:

"His heart was as hard as the nether millstone. He could do anything, and you are his true son. Yes—your mother lies there; months were passed by her in this dreary prison-house, while your father made merry on her fortune."

"And you—you were the agent of this fiendish act! That is why the secret of this chamber was made known to you. Why should you have aided Sir Hugh in consummating such wickedness?"

"Your mother was my rival. He pledged himself to marry me when she was removed; so I helped him. But he was false to his word, as he was false to every one that trusted him."

As if seeking some proof of the truth of her words, Vernor lifted one of the books. It was a Bible, and on the first leaf he saw the name of his mother traced by her own hand. Below it a few lines were written, which he mechanically read.

"In my desolation, O Lord! I will come to thee. Abandoned by all, persecuted by him I loved, imprisoned in this horrible den, I can only find courage to live on through communion with the Lord of life and light. Light! oh, for a gleam of the blessed sunshine before I die, for perish I soon must in this dreary place."

Vernor read them with a choking sensation in his throat, and again replacing the book, he said:

"We are now on equal terms; for the crime you aided to perpetrate, I will bring you to punishment at all hazards to myself, if you do not at once restore my bride to life and permit me to depart in safety with her."

"Your threats do not move me," she disdainfully replied; "but since it is my purpose to awake her, I will do so, if you promise to stand aside and not attempt to interrupt me."

"I will remain on this spot till I see her arise," he said; and Minchen approached the bed, partially drew aside the curtains, and nude several mysterious passages over the face and hands of the motionless Sylvie.

Her large black eyes unclosed, consciousness slowly returned, and, still under the volition of the gipsy, she arose, stood upon the floor, and turned toward the half-paralyzed Vernor. Sylvie had not yet quite emerged from the magnetic trance into which she had been thrown, but the first sound of his voice thoroughly aroused her.

"Sylvie! Good heavens! where did you come from? What demon has evoked your presence here?"

With a heart-rending cry she rushed toward him, threw herself at his feet and implored:

"Oh, Vernor, is it you at last! Take me back to your heart—let me be your slave—your willing slave, if you will only love me!"

Recovering from his astonishment and alarmed at the apparition of Sylvie when he had expected to see Ethel, Vernor rudely spurned the prostrate woman, and furiously said:

"Get out of my way! What have you and your accomplice done with the only woman I will ever claim as my lawful wife? I thought you were safe in the bottom of the sea, but here you are, to torment and annoy me yet. I will never reclaim you. Go back to your home and find your equal for your mate. I am of a pure and noble race, while your blood is mixed with that of the degraded negro."

No taunt could so deeply have stung Sylvie as this, for this consciousness had always been bitter to her pride. She sprang up with fury blazing in her eyes, there was the glitter of a poniard as she snatched it from its sheath, and with motions too rapid to be arrested, plunged it first into Vernor's heart, then into her own.

He staggered toward the bed, fell across its foot, and Minchen took the tottering form of Sylvie in her arms, and placed her head upon the pillows. She knew that both wounds must, in a few moments, prove mortal, for the poison with which the blade of the poniard was saturated was of the most deadly nature.

She withdrew the blade from the stiffening hand of

the dying woman, and composed her limbs, then lowering the curtain before the sarcophagus, she extinguished the light, and prepared to leave the place for ever.

Vernor never spoke after he was wounded. The blood that rushed in a stifling torrent to his mouth, soon suffocated him. Sylvie muttered a few broken prayers for forgiveness, which were heard by her who bent over her, but the motion of her lips soon ceased, and the grey shadows of death crept over her still beautiful face.

Melchior now entered the chamber, and even he seemed awed by the tragic scene before him. After a long pause he said:

"He is gone, and we shall escape the penalty of his destruction. Come, mother; the girl will soon be dead: let us go at once."

Minchen made a few passes over the face of the expiring Sylvie; her expression grew calm, her eyes closed, and the gipsy said:

"She is young and fair to die thus, but she had better perish in her youth, than to live to become what I am now."

Leaving one of the wax candles burning upon the table, the mother and son descended, fastened the trap-door, securely, and gained the corridor. Minchen sprang back the door, and wrenching off the spring, said:

"Never more shall the Secret Chamber be used by mortal man. Let the victims of jealousy and revenge lie in their secluded sepulchre till the last trump shall sound."

The two returned without delay to Lyme. Melchior informed his betrothed that it was necessary for him to leave England immediately, and demanded that she should accompany him as his wife. But Jessie had repeated of her engagement, and she positively refused to do so.

A message was delivered to Menard, purporting to have been sent by Sylvie, requesting him to join her in Taunton, where she had found a clue to her false lover. The Frenchman set out without delay, and in the interval of his absence, the gipsy and her son made arrangements to leave their late home, and join their own people abroad. Jessie steadily refused to accompany them, and they departed without her.

Menard returned from his fruitless errand, and he remained in England many months, vainly endeavouring to find some trace of the hapless Sylvie. The greater portion of the time was spent in Lyme, and his sympathy and kindness of Jessie Lithgow insensibly won him from his regret for his lost love.

When he at length returned to Barbadoes to claim his uncle's estate as heir-at-law, he bore with him his tidy northern bride, and Jessie never had cause to regret the choice she had made.

The messenger dispatched by Weston reached Clifden a few hours after Gerald and Mr. Digby had returned home, worn out with fatigue and disappointment.

The surprise and joy with which the news was hailed may be imagined. The carriage was ordered, and the two ladies, accompanied by Mr. Digby, set out on the journey to the Priory.

Gerald and his friend Bertie were on their way as soon as fresh horses could be saddled, and long before the party was re-united, Ethel had been clasped in her lover's arms, and the whole story of her abduction related.

He exclaimed, when she had finished:

"A secluded chamber in this house, Ethel? We must seek and find its entrance, or Vernor may use it to some further evil purpose."

Every effort was made on the following day to do so; but Ethel could give no idea of its situation, and after many fruitless attempts the search was given up as hopeless.

The knowledge of the existence of the room was confined to a few persons, and, as time rolled on, even the tradition of its existence passed from the memory of man, and for our day was reserved the accidental discovery of the sumptuously-furnished chamber, with its fleshless skeletons as witnesses of the crime that had been committed.

The gipsy wrote from Spain to Gerald, claiming the reward of her services to Ethel, which were liberally compensated.

She informed him his cousin would trouble him no more, as he had perished by the hand of his jealous wife, though she declined to enter into particulars.

Gerald, however, did not trust this assurance. He prosecuted the divorce till it was obtained, and, as had been previously arranged, Ethel and Alice were married on the same day to their respective lovers.

Sir Gerald Methurn rose to high station; he eventually won the Chancellor's wig, which Ethel, in her childhood, had so much disparaged. He served his country honourably and faithfully, and received as his reward an earldom, which had once been in the family

of his wife: as Earl of Clifden, he was beloved and respected by all who knew him.

Bertie, under the influence of Alice, threw aside his indifference to distinction, and, side by side with his friend, arose to fame and power; and no happier or prouder wives were found in broad England than the Countess of Clifden and Mrs. Edward Bertie.

THE END.

OUR CHEERFUL DOCTOR.

God bless our cheerful doctor,
Whose face dispels the gloom
That hovers like a phantom
Within the darkened room,
Where restless pain and sorrow
Their nightly vigils keep.
And prowling fever mocketh
At sweet unconscious sleep.

God bless our cheerful doctor,
Whose voice brings healing balm
That soothes the mind and body,
And leaves the spirit calm;
Like night-dew gently falling
On drooping plant and flower,
Refreshing sweets instilling
With silent mystic power.

God bless our cheerful doctor,
Whose smiles like sunlight fall
Upon our hearts, reflecting
Their golden beams on all:
Like camp-fire in the desert,
Or lonely beacon light,
That cheers the weary traveller
On life's dark stormy night.

God bless our cheerful doctor,
Whose tender tones reveal
The soul that for another
In sympathy can feel;
Whose care is like a mother's,
So gentle, kind and true,
That we not only bless him,
But love the doctor too.

Yea, love our cheerful doctor,
Whose merry laugh rings out,
As when from mouth of child-hood
There comes the hey-day shout;
The sluggish pulse beats quicker,
The blood starts on apace,
That brings new life at seeing
Our cheerful doctor's face.

S. E. D.

THE SHADOW ON THE HEARTH.

CHAPTER VII.

Alas! how isn't with you,
That you do bend your eyes on vacancy,
And with the incorporeal air do hold discourse?
Shakespeare.

The lady of Holmby was sitting lonely and listless in her boudoir one morning, when a tap at her door was the prelude to the entrance of her husband. She looked up eagerly and wistfully as he came in, with the vague hope that he had sought her for the purpose of making advances to a reconciliation. His cold and stern manner, however, speedily dissipated the illusion. He bowed coldly and declined a proffered seat. He had a sheet of paper in his hand.

"I have called on you, madam, on a matter of business," he said. "Here is a deed conveying a piece of land to Mr. Perkin, of Lebanham; and it requires your signature to a release of your right of dower. Examine the paper, and see for yourself what the tenor of it is."

"It is of no consequence," replied Mrs. Carew, wearily, as she dipped her pen in the inkstand.

"Stay, madam, I will bring a witness to your signature."

The lady merely bowed as she sank back in her deep-cushioned *fintueil*. Mental distress had changed her, but yet it seemed to enhance her loveliness; that alabaster whiteness so spiritualized the character of her beauty—a stranger to her history would have pronounced it angelic.

Are we doomed at every step in life to recognize the falsity of appearances?

Mr. Carew absented himself from the room for a few minutes, and then returned with the bailiff of his farm, who witnessed the signature of the lady and withdrew.

Mr. Carew followed him after a brief interval. As he passed through the door he could not help seeing the face and figure of his wife in a large *Psyché* glass. She was weeping bitterly. It did not move him, however.

He passed on to his library, and letting down the

desk of a cabinet bookcase, was soon immersed in his accounts.

It is essential to the proper understanding of what follows to note this. His mind was perfectly clear and unclouded; his occupation tended to clear his intellect, and keep it free from disturbing elements. There is no room for the play of the imagination in arithmetical computations.

He had just added up a column of figures, and verified the sum, when his attention was arrested by a distinct rapping sound. As it seemed to proceed from the door, he called out "come in!" No one appearing, he went to the door, opened it, and looked out into the corridor. It was empty. So he resumed his pencil and paper. But now the rapping was repeated, and he distinctly felt the vibration of the desk on which his hand was resting. It was singular. He rose from the table and walked towards the window. A bright calm day—sunbeams and leaf-shadows making the garden walks a tessellated pavement of gold and grey mosaic—birds singing in the boughs, all nature at peace. The unwonted sounds within the room had ceased, and he sat down to his desk again. But now the rappings increased in vehemence.

Hitherto Seaton Carew, who was a practical, common-sense man, keen and shrewd, had treated the phenomena of spiritual manifestations as tricks of impostors or delusions of the senses. Nor would he admit now that there was anything of a spiritual character in the noises that he heard. They were mysterious and unaccountable—but they did not excite or disturb him. He was too profoundly sceptical on such subjects to be readily moved by what was simply inexplicable. Hence, notwithstanding the renewal of the sounds, he resumed his work. But he was destined to experience something far more marvellous. A thrill, like that produced by a powerful current of electricity, passed up his right hand, and a force, not proceeding from his volition, and indeed contending with and overcoming his will and purpose, withdrew his pencil from his figures and began to trace words not suggested by his own mind, on the blank space of the sheet of paper.

The words thus traced were:

"Do not go to Lebanham to-night. A terrible danger menaces you. Remain at home. I am permitted to say no more."

"Decidedly, I am losing my senses," thought Seaton Carew. As the thoughts passed through his mind, the pencil which he was still compelled to grasp firmly, in spite of his attempts to drop it, added to the writing the signature—"Judith Carew"—his mother's name!

He hastily tore open a drawer and taking a letter, faded and discoloured, from a pile, compared the handwriting, and the signature with the pencilled words before him. The latter had all the autographic peculiarities of the former. He folded them both up together, and placed them in the drawer; then, taking his hat and stick walked out of the house and rambled over his farm, meditating on the startling phenomena he had just witnessed.

He was soon joined by the bailiff, who required instructions in reference to his duties. Seaton Carew gave them clearly. He noticed the growing crops, made some remarks on the condition of his cattle and horses, and after an hour spent in this way returned to his library. Taking out the mysterious paper again, half expecting to find it a blank, he saw the same warning lines and the same signature. His senses, then, had not deceived him. He put the paper away, and threw himself back in his chair, expecting and wishing for some further revelations. He appealed, mentally, to his mother, long since dead, to commune with him more freely and fully. But there was no response.

Then he tried to persuade himself that there was, after all, nothing supernatural in the occurrence. He himself, unaided, in a dreamy mood, had doubtless traced the lines. But he was not in a dreamy mood; his mind, at the time of the occurrence, was intent on something foreign to the idea of that message; moreover, he had all his life written one plain uniform hand, and when, out of sport, he had sought to disguise his manuscript, he had never succeeded. It was always instantly identified. The handwriting of the warning words was not only essentially different from his in every particular, but, in every particular it resembled that of his mother. He could arrive at no satisfactory solution, short of unquestioning belief in the doctrine of spiritual communications. But even admitting this—granting the theory of the spiritualists in its full extent, how could he be sure of the identity of the spirit that addressed him? Almost all the messages purporting to come from the spirit-world were either vague, or puerile, or not-riously false. The spirits of the great departed—wise and learned statesmen, the lights of the world during their earthly existence—were apt to talk like fools. The spiritualists explained this by saying that, as there are multitudes of knaves in this world, so there are multitudes of malign spirits

in the other; and what more natural, than that they should seek to impose on mortals from the pure love of mischief and confusion? Admitting spiritual communication as a fixed fact, then, what evidence was there that the communicating spirit was good and not evil; a spirit of health?"

Wearied and worn out by this maze of doubt and conjecture, he ended, as might have been expected of a man of his strength of mind and age, in rejecting the whole matter as a delusion. He had known men who were in the habit of consulting clairvoyants on matters of business, as to investments of money, the commercial standing of persons with whom they proposed dealing, and similar matters, and who were invariably losers by their credulity. He would not fall into a similar error—not he. He had positively promised to meet Mr. Perkins in the evening, to consummate the bargain and sale, and like a punctual and correct man of business, he would keep his appointment—there was an end of it. This settled, he resumed his writing, and was troubled no more that day by rappings or disturbances of any kind.

That evening Frederick Carew made his appearance at the tavern at Lebanham, and a very sorry appearance it was. He had gone down-hill very rapidly since we saw him last. His clothes were shabby, and hung about him loosely; his face was pale, except where pink blotches gave evidence of his dissipated habits. Yet there was an attempted spruceness in his attire, often affected by men who are running to ruin; thus, he had a very flashing necktie, and his boots, though they were trodden out of shape, and the soles worn thin as paper, were polished brilliantly.

Mr. Jervis Chester had accompanied him, but that gentleman had retired early to bed, leaving Frederick lounging in the coffee-room, lying in wait for a treat from some of the rustics with whom he had an acquaintance. He was disappointed, however, for none of them paid him the compliment of inviting him to drink. It was now past eight o'clock. Mr. Perkins came in and recognized Frederick. He was not aware of the rupture between the young man and his father. Saluting him with a familiar nod, he motioned to the bar, an invitation which it is needless to say young Carew accepted with alacrity.

Mr. Perkins called for a glass of cider, for he was a very temperate man; but young Carew asked for brandy, and pouring out half a tumbler of the fiery spirit with a trembling hand, swallowed it with the utmost avidity, while the glass rattled against his teeth. He did not know how long it might be before he could procure another glass, and he was perpetually craving stimulants.

"Seen your father this evening?" asked Perkins. "No, I haven't," replied Frederick, carelessly. "He's beyond his time," said Perkins, looking at the clock. "He promised to meet me here at eight o'clock."

"Oh, he owes you money, I suppose?" "Just the contrary," replied Perkins. "I've been buying four lots of land of him—a thousand pounds a lot. Pretty strong, ain't it? and he was to bring me the deed to-night. I've got the money all ready for him. There—I jest see him pass the window this minute."

"Well, excuse me, Mr. Perkins," said the young man. "I'll see you again;" and he slipped hastily out of the room.

The elder Carew came in a moment afterwards, apologized for his delay, and went into a private room with Mr. Perkins. The latter read over the deed which Seaton Carew handed him, and, finding it correct, paid over the money, deposited the document in a huge leather pocket-book, placed it carefully in his breast-pocket, and hastened home with it.

After a few minutes, Seaton Carew also left the room. In the passage he was confronted by a man, who addressed him with:

"One word with you, sir, if you please?" The voice was agitated and husky, and Seaton Carew did not immediately recognize it. "Your name, sir, if you please?" "Frederick Carew."

The old man recoiled a step or two, and then said, sternly:

"Stand aside, and let me pass." "But one word," implored the young man. "Not one—I have done with you for ever." "Do not be so cruel!" said the young man. "Believe me, I deeply repent my misconduct, and am resolved to lead a better life in future. I came here to tell you so."

"Come here half-drunk to tell me so!" retorted Seaton Carew, in a tone of disgust and incredulity.

"I am not half-drunk," said Frederick. "Your very breath betrays you; it poisons me. Faugh! Stand back, and let me pass."

"You shall hear me," cried Frederick, clutching his arm. "This is the turning-point of my career. I am desperate. Help me now, and you will make a

man of me. Give me some money, and I give you my word of honour that I will never drink again."

"You have made such promises before, and in every instance you have broken your word. I have no money to give you."

"Don't tell me that!" cried Frederick. "I know that you have just received four thousand pounds."

"I did not mean that I had no money in my possession, but that I had no money to bestow on you to hasten your plunge into perdition. It would be a crime to give you money; it would be to render myself the accomplice of your debaucheries."

"Give me something," pleaded Frederick; "a hundred pounds—ten—five."

"Not a pound—not a penny."

"Is that your last word?"

"It is. You know me well enough to know that when I am right, I am inflexible."

"Then mark my words," cried Frederick, in a raised voice. "I told you that I was desperate. I tell you I must have money, and money I will have, if I obtain it by crime. By fair means or foul I will find an issue from the cruel straits to which I am reduced."

"Go work for a living, if you want money. I have worked hard all my life. You have squandered in months thousands of what I accumulated by years of honest toil or by strict attention to business. I will have nothing to do with you. I have told you so by letter—I repeat it now by word of mouth."

"Beware!" The young man still stood confronting his indignant father. The latter, provoked beyond control at his pertinacity, seized him by the collar, hurled him against the wall, and strode past him out of the house.

"By—!" muttered the young man, in a tone of demoniacal passion, "I will have my revenge for this."

The altercation had been overheard by more than one person in the house. The landlord was all ears, and when the noise ceased, he protruded his head from the bar-door, which opened on the entry where this scene had taken place, and swept its length and breadth with his sharp lynx-like eyes. The hall was empty, and he subsided behind his bar, where he dropped into a cane-bottomed chair, and pensively contemplated the bottles on his counter.

CHAPTER VIII.

O! such a deed
As from the body of affection plucks
The very soul! Hamlet

SEATON CAREW strode homeward with a step to which the tide of angry passion imparted the vigour and elasticity of youth. But the passion and the vigour soon vanished, giving place to a sense of heart-weariness, lassitude, and sorrow. Wife and son both false to him—both lost! Only Marian true—and he an old man! His step became slow and uncertain.

All around, above, was calm upon that summer evening. Here and there lights twinkled in bedroom windows, and disappeared. The lights of heaven moved on calmly and majestically. The heavy woods and hills reared their black profiles against the dark blue sky. The meadows were spangled with glittering glowworms. But the wayfarer heeled not these sights. Wearily, foot by foot, he trailed his limbs towards what was now home only in name.

He left the highway, crossed the damp fields, and, opening a gate, struck into a woodland pathway within the broad domain of which he was the undisputed master, which he had hoped one day to give into the hands of a son worthy to succeed him. That dream was past, and he thought he could cheerfully lie down in his quiet grave, but for the one tie that still bound him to earth, his beautiful, loving daughter. To see her settled in life, with a fair prospect of happiness, was inducement enough, after all, to endure a little longer the weight of woe which an inscrutable Providence had heaped upon him.

Not many minutes after this, Stephen, the faithful servant of Seaton Carew, was traversing the same path which his master was pursuing, but in an opposite direction, and provided with a lighted stable-lantern.

It is said that all men are cowards in the dark. Stephen Phillips was no exception to the rule. He was, moreover, very superstitious, and that intensified his dread of lonely rambles after night-fall. To him the woods were peopled with phantoms. His grandmothers had, in his tender years, instilled into his childish mind an implicit belief in enchantments, and all the legendary cobwebs which modern civilization has swept away with a ruthless hand. Hence it was an act of the highest heroism in this faithful vassal to set out by himself to seek his master and guide him to Holmby. He might have exclaimed, as Marlborough was wont on the eve of an engagement—"How this

little body trembles at what this great soul is bound to achieve!"

The body of simple Stephen Phillips did indeed tremble, and his teeth chattered in his head. He was even afraid of his own shadow, magnified into huge and fantastic proportions and projected diagonally on the pathway and the tree-trunks. Whistling he resorted to, as a stimulant to his courage, but gave up as an impossible achievement. If all tunes had been composed of demi-semiquavers his performance might have been a success. But he talked to himself as he moved along in a quiet terror.

"What—what's that? Oh, that's nothing but an oak-stump! Who—who—wh's afraid? Not Stern Phillips. Ah! I'm losing my senses, sure! Mercy on us, sure I heard a noise! No, it was only a hoot-owl! Ah, ah! I was not born in the woods to be scared by a hoot-owl! Hark, what was that?"

A long, loud, piercing cry, proceeding evidently from a human throat, broke upon the night with a ghastly resonance.

"Frederick, Frederick!" shrieked the voice, and then all was silent as the grave.

Stephen recognized his master's voice, and instantly became brave as a lion.

All his superstitious fears, all his selfish apprehensions, were given to the winds. It was enough that he had heard a cry of distress and agony, and that distress and agony evidently endured by the man he most loved and venerated on earth.

He sprang forward with the speed of a roebuck, and such was his impetus that he soon stumbled and nearly fell over a dark object that lay prostrate directly in his pathway.

The lantern fell from his hand, but was fortunately not extinguished. Stephen caught it up, and kneeling down, examined by its light the dark object before him.

Seaton Carew lay there, gasping and moaning, evidently death-stricken. The faithful servant raised his head, spoke to him, opened his vest and shirt. Alas! alas! a deep, dark tide, oozing from the region of the heart, told the terrible tale. Murdered!

The breath of the victim came in short gasps, and the large form of the old man quivered in the convulsions immediately preceding a violent death.

"Speak, sir!" cried Stephen. "Speak! who has done this?"

For a moment the murdered man's eyes rested on the face of his faithful servant: for a moment his lips moved as if striving to syllable a word; but then they closed; the hand, that Stephen fancied grasped his kindly and significantly, became rigid; the head dropped back; a rattling in the throat, a convulsive agitation of the muscles, and it was all over. Seaton Carew was dead—assassinated! In that calm summer night, in the woods of his own Holmby, which should thereafter whisper of murder, so long as a leaf rustled in the passing breeze. The faithful servant fell forward on the prostrate form, and bedewed the lifeless bosom with a rain of tears.

But, in the midst of his grief, he heard footsteps, and, springing to his feet, held up his lantern, and challenged:

"Who goes there?"

Two figures now appeared upon the scene; Nell the gipsy, wild, weird, excited, her self-locks streaming disordered on her shoulders, advanced, holding by the collar the cowering, shaking figure of a man.

"Hold up the light, Stephen, Phillips," she said sternly. "Let it fall upon his face. What do we see here?"

"Mr. Frederick!" said the servant, almost paralyzed with horror.

"Look at his hands!" said the gipsy.

Frederick himself stretched out his hands to the lantern, as if obeying an imperative command. They were red with that life-blood from which he had derived the current that flowed through his own veins.

"Woe! woe! woe!" shrieked Nell, holding out her hand up to heaven, as with the others she still grasped the collar of her prisoner. "I predicted woe to Holmby, but never did spirits tell me of this horror! I never loved the man who lies there, but I never wished him such an end as this."

"What's to be done?" said Stephen, who was beside himself with grief and horror.

Nell calmly answered.

"Go to the town and proclaim this deed to all who dwell therein. Rouse the man of law, the police superintendent, from his slumbers, rouse the people, and bid them hasten to the spot. They must see this body ere it be removed; and then it must be taken to Holmby. The dead man must rest beneath his own roof, and not under the stars, to-night. There are soft beds in Holmby!" she added, in something of her habitual vein of bitterness.

"But," objected Stephen, "it won't do to leave you alone."

"I am more than a match for the conscience-stricken wretch," replied the gipsy. "But we will secure him first. Take this blanket from my shoulder."

Stephen obeyed her.

"Have you a knife?"

Stephen produced one from his pocket.

"Now cut me a broad strip from this blanket, lengthwise. That's it. Now, double it, and tie his arms behind him—tight—tight—no matter how much you hurt him."

The servant faithfully carried out his instructions. "Now, another strip, Stephen. That's for his legs. Take a double turn, and be sure of the knot."

The prisoner, who was mute, nerveless, and unresistant, was secured in the manner indicated.

"Thanks," said the gipsy, with a grim smile of satisfaction. "It is well. Now, leave your knife with me."

"For what?" asked Stephen.

"To kill him if he attempts to escape," replied the gipsy.

She had thrown the prisoner full length on the ground, and now sat down beside him in the attitude of a stern and vigilant watcher.

"But ain't you afraid to be left with the dead body?" asked Stephen.

"The living are more to be feared than the dead. Go!"

The man made the best of his way. During the brief period of time which this consumed he was beset by no superstitious terrors; the magnitude and horror of the tragedy which had just been enacted cast into the shade all imaginary evils.

Rochefoucauld has said, "there is something in the misfortunes of our best friends which is not unpleasant to us."

To a certain extent this apparently heartless maxim is true. Our messenger of ill-tidings was as much attached to his master as it was possible for one being to be to another; he would have laid down his life for him, and thought it glory and honour to die in serving his friend and benefactor. Yet his agony was mitigated by the consciousness of being the bearer of news of such tremendous import as the violent death of Seaton Carew, the millionaire of Holmby.

He could not pass the tavern without entering. The landlord and a few sturdy, hard-drinking customers were seated in the bar-room.

"What's the matter, Stephen?" asked the landlord.

"Matter enough," he replied, in a tone that commanded universal attention. "Master's been murdered, and I'm on my way to the magistrate."

"Murdered!" The word sobered even the professional drunks who heard him.

"Murdered!" It struck the landlord aghast, and sent a sudden thrill through his whole frame.

"Where—when—who done it?" he gasped; but the messenger was already out of the house and on his way to acquaint the legal authorities with the commission of the crime.

Then the landlord recalled the altercation between father and son, and the threats of the latter.

His customers gazed inquiringly into his face, as he sat musing morbidly; for they were wont to regard him as an oracle on almost every subject. After a long silence, he spoke:

"He's been murdered for his money. He had four thousand pounds about him; Perkins paid it to him this night, in 't is very house, little more'n an hour ago. And," he added, deliberately, "I could give a pretty good guess as to who done it."

"Who—who?" cried a dozen voices, eagerly.

"No matter," was the moody answer. "By the way,"—and he suddenly struck his hand to his forehead, caught up a light, and rushed out of the room. The next moment he was rapping at the door of a chamber on the floor above.

"What the deuce are you making such a racket for?" growled a voice from within.

"Open the door; I've got news for you," said the landlord.

The door was opened to admit the landlord, and Mr. Jervis Chester appeared, just as he had slipped out of bed, in his night-dress.

"I gave orders not to be disturbed when I turned in," he said, angrily.

"Where's your partner, eh?" asked the landlord.

"My partner? Oh, you mean that drunken scamp, Frederick Carew; you ought to know better than I—I left him in the bar at seven o'clock."

"Well I've got news for him if he doesn't know it already," said the landlord.

"What, has the old man relented, and agreed to come down with his dust handsomely?"

The landlord shook his head.

"He has been murdered."

"H—who? Frederick!"

"Frederick's father."

"You don't mean it?" cried Chester. "Murdered!"

"When—where—who did it?"

"I only know the fact. His servant just brought the news."

"By George, I don't wonder you woke me up. I

can't sleep after this. What will Frederick say to it?"

And he began to dress himself hastily.

"The old man had four thousand about him," said the landlord, "when he left this house."

"What! has he been here this evening? Did he and Frederick meet?"

"They did, and quarrelled. He asked the old man for money, which was refused. The old man shoved him agin the wall, and went out of the house. Then Frederick swore a big oath that he'd be revenged."

The two men looked at each other steadily.

"You don't mean to say that," said Chester. "No, by —! that would be too bad. Yet he was drunk and desperate."

"Put the circumstances together, and what else can you make of it?" asked the landlord.

"It looks black enough," said Chester, who had by this time finished his toilet, and was ready to go downstairs with the landlord.

Meanwhile, Stephen had reached the police-superintendent's house, and found him just getting ready to go to bed. He told his story intelligently and pointedly, and the officer said he would go himself with two constables and secure the person of the suspected assassin. The party was swelled by the accession of the landlord, Chester, and the tavern idlers. The men conversed in undertones as they went along. The superintendent took the opportunity of questioning Stephen Phillips again, as they moved on, side by side, and he repeated his former story without the slightest variation.

When they reached the woodland glade where the body lay as it had fallen, all the spectators, moved by one impulse, bared their heads. There was no crowding or jostling; no eager or indecent curiosity manifested; but they stood about the corpse that looked so ghastly white in the light of the lanterns, hushed, reverent and awe-stricken. After a period of mute contemplation, all eyes were turned on two other figures that intensified the interest of the scene of death.

The attitude of Nell, as she sat crouched together, with her arms crossed and her head bowed over her knees was striking, from its statuesque immobility. Frederick lay on the ground nearly as motionless as his presumed victim.

As the group gathered round her, the gipsy raised her head, and recognizing the officer, rose and said, pointing to young Carew:

"My task is ended—I seized that wretch as he was flying from his work and held him fast. I now surrender him into your custody."

"You have acted courageously, Nell," said the superintendent, "and the public is beholden to you."

He then asked her a few questions, to which he received clear and coherent answers. She was on her way homeward when she heard a cry of distress, followed by the words—"Frederick! Frederick!" She sprang to the spot whence the cry proceeded, and encountered young Carew, flying at full speed. She seized him and held him till Stephen Phillips showed himself, which was almost simultaneous with her own appearance on the spot.

The officer, of course, felt authorized to detain the young man as a prisoner, and directed the constables to search him. At the very outset of their search they found his father's pocket-book, containing the sum of money which he had received that evening from the purchaser of his land.

On searching the body a dirk-knife, stained with blood, dropped out of the folds of the murdered man's shirt, and the breadth of the blade corresponded with that of the incision on the left breast of the victim. On a small silver label on the handle of this weapon was inscribed the name of Frederick Carew, and thus circumstantial evidence of the strongest character pointed to the him as the murderer.

A deep groan, the first sound or sign of life he had given, burst from the lips of the wretched young man, upon whom all eyes were now turned with looks of hate and anger. But for the presence of the police, it is possible that the rude crowd might have anticipated the tardy and uncertain action of the law, and that there, on the spot, taken red-handed as he was, he might have expiated his guilt in the presence of his murdered victim.

Indeed there was a menacing movement towards him, but Nell waved back the advancing figures with an imperious and commanding gesture.

"Hold!" she said. "Harm not a hair of his head. Wait and see if there is justice. And now," she added, take up your dead. Take him up tenderly—for he was a noble man—I say it, who never loved him or any one belonging to him while living."

"Where to?" asked Stephen.

"Where but to Holmby?" replied Nell.

"Stay," said the superintendent. "Some one must prepare his wife."

Nell smiled bitterly. Approaching him, she whispered in his ear:

"You little know the relations between Seaton Carew and his wife. They lived under the same roof, but apart. She was unfaithful to him."

"Your venomous tongue spares no one," retorted the officer, angrily.

"In the presence of that dead man, do you think I would lie?" replied Nell. "I will go and break the tidings to her."

"I wish I had a better messenger," said the officer, musingly. "I would go myself, but I must accompany the prisoner to Lebanham, to make out his commitment in form, and to protect him from violence."

Nell scarcely waited the conclusion of his speech before she started in the direction of the mansion.

The group which remained, divided into two sections. The first under the direction of Stephen Phillips, lifted the corpse from the earth and bore it towards Holmby; the second, accompanied the superintendent, the officers, and the prisoner to Lebanham. Jervis Chester went with the former party, but was not one of the bearers.

All Lebanham was astir when the prisoner was brought back. Every man, woman and child had heard the news, and gloom, horror and indignation were depicted on every countenance.

(To be continued)

HOLYROOD PALACE.

HER MAJESTY has been pleased, in accordance with a memorial signed by a number of influential Scottish gentlemen, to send to Holyrood a number of the Stuart portraits from Hampton Court Gallery. These portraits were asked for Holyrood Palace on the ground that they belonged peculiarly, if not exclusively, to Scottish history, or that, if equally connected with England, they could be spared from the large gallery of Hampton Court.

The portraits sent down embrace the period from the middle of the sixteenth to the end of the seventeenth century, and nearly all the subjects of them are connected by birth or other ties with Scotland. The best picture of the series is Anne of Denmark, by Van Somer, consort of James I., and who was received with great rejoicings by the city of Edinburgh, and with great preparations at Holyrood, in May, 1599, while her royal husband was as yet only King of Scotland. There is also a small portrait of James by the same artist, and one of his son, Henry, Prince of Wales.

There is a large-sized but unattractive picture containing portraits of Henry, Lord Barnley, husband of Mary Queen of Scots, and of his brother Charles, the father of the hapless Arabella Stuart. The portrait of Margaret, Countess of Lennox, mother of Darnley, ascribed to Holbein, is a much finer work of art than the last-mentioned, and is singularly interesting as the portrait of one who, both in her ancestry and posterity, united the royal lines of England and Scotland.

The portrait of the Admiral Oughton, by an artist unknown, and which many must have admired at Hampton Court, is among those now sent down; also portraits of the Count Palatine and Princess Elizabeth (King and Queen of Bohemia), by Janssen, and copies from Vandyck of the children of Charles I., of Charles II., from Kneller, and James II., after Lely.

These pictures have been hung in the room known as Lord Darnley's Audience-chamber. We believe it is the desire of the gentlemen who have interested themselves in this matter to have formed at Holyrood a gallery illustrative of Scotland's history as a separate kingdom, and that not merely in the line of its ancient monarchy, but in all departments in which ancient art can be rendered subservient to historical illustration.

THE WIFE.—Woman's love, like the rose blooming in the arid desert, spreads its rays over the barren plain of the human heart—and while all around it is blank and desolate, it rises more strengthened from the absence of every other charm. In no other situation does the love of woman appear more beautiful than in that of wife; parents, brethren, and friends, have claims upon the affections, but the love of a wife is of a distinct and different nature. A daughter may yield her life to the preservation of a parent, a sister may devote herself to a suffering brother, but the feelings which induce her to this conduct are not such as those which induce a wife to follow the husband of her choice through every pain and peril that can befall him, to watch over him in danger, to cheer in adversity, and even remain unaltered at his side in the depths of ignominy and shame. It is an heroic devotion which a woman displays in her adherence to the fortunes of a hopeless husband; when we behold her in domestic scenes, a mere passive creature of enjoyment, an intellectual toy, brightening the family circle with her endearments, and prized

for the extreme joy which that presence and those endowments are calculated to impart, we can scarcely credit that the fragile being who seems to hold existence by a thread is capable of supporting the extreme of human suffering; nay, when the heart of man sinks beneath the weight of agony, that she should retain her pristine powers of delight, and by her words of comfort and patience, lead the distracted murmur to peace and resignation. Man profits by connection with the world, but woman never; their constituents of mind are different; the principles of thought and action are moulded variously, and where the character of man is dignified and ennobled, that of woman becomes reduced and degraded. The one is raised and exalted by mingled associations, the purity of the other is maintained in silence and seclusion.

GRACE AULIFFE'S SECRET.

TALL and very pale, with hair prematurely strewn with silver, and a face seriously marked with the traces of that fell ravager, small-pox, Grace Auliffe's appearance was still more disfigured with a pair of gold spectacles. She was very thin, and her closely compressed lips conveyed the idea of a hard, cold nature. Truly, Mrs. Auliffe was just the person to be assistant matron of a lunatic asylum.

Grace Auliffe was not mad, but sometimes when she looked on the harmless maniacs that surrounded her, she wondered that reason still retained its supremacy in the citadel of her throbbing, bursting brain.

As she looked over a morning journal, as had been her custom for years, suddenly a scarlet spot glowed like a coal of fire on her pallid cheek—the paper dropped from her hand, only to be caught up again with feverish haste. There it was, in the list of arrivals by some foreign steamer—the name she had sought so long, so vainly!

"Mr. and Mrs. Henry Silvertown, nurse and child." "So he is married," she muttered between her teeth. "Married to some beauty with fair hair and blue eyes, I suppose. Really I must endeavour to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Henry Silvertown!"

A moment later she smiled, as a fiend might smile, with the light of Pandemonium on its face, as her eye fell upon a brief paragraph, in the advertising columns.

"A housekeeper for Silvertown Place, eh?" she mused, setting her teeth closely together. "I think the place might suit me!"

She rose from her seat, whiter than usual, but very calm, and went up-stairs to the superintendent's snug apartment, from which she soon after emerged, with her countenance fixed in grim determination; and Cedar House lost its assistant matron that very night.

The level shafts of sunset were shivering into diamond atoms among the glittering cut glass and silver on the dining-room table at Silvertown Place, where the fair wife sat, with her blue eyes gazing far out on the sylvan landscape beyond the open French casements.

"What a lovely spot!" she murmured. "Oh, Henry, in your wildest and most glowing descriptions you never told me how fair this Silvertown was!"

"Do you like it, dearest?" "He bent to press his lips to her forehead, with the lover-like devotion which two years of married life had not yet banished. At that self-same moment the door was opened and the servant announced:

"Mrs. Auliffe." Tall, dark, and spectral, she advanced into the room, and as her long shadow fluttered past Alice Silvertown, the young wife shrank as though a chill had struck through all her veins. But remembering her duties as hostess, she rose.

"The new housekeeper, I believe. Be seated, Mrs. Auliffe. You look pale and wearied—allow me to give you a glass of wine."

Mrs. Auliffe did indeed look pale, as her eyes met the startled, strange gaze of Henry Silvertown's dark orbs, paler than the white lilies without, or the white folds of Alice's dress.

"A glass of water, Henry; quick—she is fainting!" "No," she said, coldly, "I never faint. You were about, I presume, to inquire respecting my references. I have two excellent ones—first, from the Superintendent of the Cedar House Asylum, and secondly, from Mr. Silvertown's first wife!"

Henry Silvertown's face was ghastly, as Alice turned to him with a glance of surprise.

"Mr. Silvertown has not been married previously, Mrs. Auliffe," she said, smiling. "You are mistaken."

"Am I mistaken, Mr. Silvertown?" she inquired, in words as smooth and cold as ice.

"She is right, Alice. Though I never told you, dear, I have been married before, when I was very young, and my wife—"

"Died—is it not so?" interrupted Mrs. Auliffe.

"She died—yes," he said, looking appealingly at the stern woman in black.

"You see, Mrs. Silvertown," said Grace, with an almost diabolical smile, "these husbands almost always keep back some little chapter of their life's romance even from the most cherished wife. May I consider myself engaged?"

"Certainly—by all means," returned Mr. Silvertown, eagerly. His wife looked at him with a surprised face.

"Had we better decide at once, Henry?"

"My dear," he replied wiping the cold drops from his forehead, "there is no use in delay. Mrs.—Mrs. Auliffe will undoubtedly manage our household to suit us."

Alice did not question the matter further, but she was by no means satisfied.

"What are you writing?" she asked, as she passed him, half-an-hour later.

He was bending over a table, hurriedly scribbling some words on the back of an old letter with his gold pencil.

"Only a business memorandum, dearest."

But she did not see him drop the "business memorandum" among the sable folds of Grace Auliffe's dress, as she sat working before the open window. Perhaps if she had, the demon Jealousy might have been aroused even in her gentle nature.

Grace unfolded it quietly, as she leaned out of the window to look at the tangled China roses, and read these words, written in almost illegible characters:

"Be at the foot of the glen at nine to-night. I must speak with you."

Grace smiled to herself, and crushed the paper in her hand with a fierce joy.

At nine, Mrs. Silvertown rose, to lull her blue-eyed baby to sleep with her own cradle-song, for no nurse ever usurped that sweet office from her.

"You will come with me, Henry?" she said, coaxingly. "Harry always sleeps sooner when papa is by his side."

"Not to-night, Alice," returned the husband, evasively. "I think I shall take a cigar and a stroll in the moonlight."

The young mother went up-stairs a little disappointed.

"Has Mrs. Auliffe retired so early?" she asked the nurse.

"I believe so, ma'am; anyway the light's out in her room," said the woman, somewhat coldly. She did not greatly fancy the idea of a housekeeper of Mrs. Auliffe's distant superiority.

The golden moonlight slept in delicious calm on the little dell beyond the glen that skirted the northern boundaries of Silvertown Place. Just where the turf sloped gently down, a fallen tree lay imbedded in moss and tall, scented ferns. Mrs. Auliffe sat there, motionless as a monumental figure, as Henry emerged from the dense shade of the glen.

"Grace!"

"Henry!"

He ground his teeth as he looked at her.

"Woman! what dreadful mystery is this? Why do you come here to torture me, and not me alone, but one whose innocence and sweetness should be a shield from your evil arts?"

Grace smiled.

"I disturb your second edition of Eden, do I? That is a pity. But you see, I have sworn to be revenged, and revenged I will be!"

"For what? What harm have I done you, Grace? I swear to you that I have believed you dead these ten long years."

"And you think I shall credit that tale?"

"Listen to me, Grace," he said, fervently uplifting one hand towards the cloudless violet concave above. "I swear to you by yonder eternal heaven that I am telling only the truth. When my uncle first told me that he was cognizant of our boy and girl marriage I was in Europe; the next mail brought tidings that you were dead."

"Never!" interrupted the assistant matron, huskily.

"At all events he told me so—he deceived me with a circumstantial account of your illness and death. What his motive was I cannot conjecture—possibly a vague hope that ere I returned to England some chance might have verified his words. I believed him. Grace, you should have disproved this assertion—you should have written to me. Why did you let me mourn you as dead, without a sign?"

She smiled coldly.

"Do I look like the person who sues a recreant husband for his gracious recognition?"

"Why do you come here, when it is too late for reparation?" he reiterated.

"To be revenged!"

"Grace! think though you are, you would never—"

"Would I not?" she exclaimed, fiercely. "You

do not know me, Henry Silvertown. Now give me your attention. Ten years I have waited and suffered; now my time is come. For every pang you have inflicted on me, you shall suffer tenfold through your dainty wife—your wife," she repeated, with a contemptuous jeer. "And when I have enjoyed the sweet revenge sufficiently long, I shall depose her from her place, and send her homeless into the world—a wife, yet no wife. Have I touched you to the quick now? Nay, it is useless to plead or remonstrate. I am no more to be moved than yonder rock."

He saw the resolution written in every line of her adamant face, and turned away sick with horror.

All that night he paced his chamber revolving in his mind the various aspects of his hideous bondage; and when morning dawned, grey and cool, beyond the solemn woods, his resolve was taken.

The earliest railway train bore him away on its wings of fire and smoke, and as the carriages swept past the pine thickets that edged his own estate, he saw that the stateliest tree in all the glen was splintered to its heart by the destructive hand of lightning.

And then, for the first time, he remembered how the angry storm had burst at midnight above the house as he walked up and down, up and down in the solitude of his own room.

"You here, Silvertown? Why, what on earth—"

The dabbler in occult sciences looked up from his glass retorts and phials in mute surprise, as his old college mate entered his crowded sanctum.

To hear Henry Silvertown chat of old times, and laugh over various continental experiences, one would have imagined that trouble had never cast a passing shadow on his heart. Mortmain thought he had never known his friend so brilliant.

"By the way," said the latter, as he finally rose to depart, "did you not once tell me of a subtle poison you had distilled which left neither trace nor odour in its deadly path? I was telling a friend of its properties, and he laughed at what he termed the improbability of the thing."

"Improbable!" exclaimed Mortmain. "No more improbable than electricity, psychology, or any other of the marvels of modern science."

"So I told the fellow. Suppose you give me a few grains of the drug; I might try it on a troublesome dog of mine, and thus at the same time rid myself of a pest, and convince him of the discovery."

Ralph Mortmain unlocked a drawer, and took out a small pearl box, from which he measured out two or three grains of a curious, though scentless, blue powder.

"I think that will satisfy him," he said, drily, folding the drug in two or three papers.

"Is it enough?"

"To kill a gnat or a giant. There is more death in one of those atoms than a battery of guns could carry."

"Thank you. I will be very careful."

And Silvertown left the room, with cold drops standing on his brow.

The noonday sun glowed in amber radiance over the gables of Silvertown Place, as he entered silently at the back-door.

Avoiding the more generally habited parts of the mansion, he stole softly towards the room that had been assigned to Grace Auliffe.

"She will be below stairs at this time of day," he argued to himself, "keeping up a show of attention to her nominal duties. The room will be unoccupied."

He was right.

As he dropped the fatal grains into the cut glass water-bottle on the stand, his hand shook like a leaf. A faint blue tinge seemed to sparkle through the clear element, and then it became as limpid as before. And Henry Silvertown, weighed down with the shadow of a great crime, and unutterably miserable, staggered from the room.

"Papa! papa!"

How joyously little Harry stretched out his dimpled hands, uttering the first words his baby lips had been taught to syllable. Mr. Silvertown shrank from the child's blue eyes.

"He does not know that his father is a murderer!" quivered through his mind.

His wife's light foot crossed the hall.

"Why, Henry, how suddenly you left us this morning!"

"She does not know the stain on my hand, or she would not speak to me," he thought. "Patience—I must command myself yet a little longer, or am I indeed going mad!"

She put up her rosy mouth to kiss him—he shrank away with a shudder.

"Why do you turn from me, Henry?" she asked reproachfully.

"Because I am a murderer!" was the answer he with difficulty suppressed.

"You are not angry with me, dearest?"

"No, love, no!" he groaned.
 "By the way, I have not seen the new house-keeper this morning, Henry. I hope she is not ill, but—"

"Ma'am—if you please!"
 The pale, scared face of the old butler peered through the half-open door.

"What is it, Torrey? What has happened?"
 "Mary Benner—that's the under housemaid, mem—"

"Well—what of her? Is she ill?"
 "No, ma'am—no worse than hysterics. But she was coming from the village, through the short-cut in the wood, and—"

He stopped short. Mrs. Silverton rushed into the hall, uttering a piercing shriek, as her eye fell on the ghastly sight extended there, on a hastily constructed litter of green branches.

In an instant her husband was at her side, and saw the dead corpse of Grace Auliffe, whitely staring into his face, with glassy eyes, and lips that still seemed to wear the demonic smile with which she last confronted him; while upon the temple a single blackened spot showed where the fiery finger of the lightning had touched her.

Dead! dead! And he was free!
 "Struck by lightning? Mercy! but that's an awful death!" gasped one of the servants, wringing her hands.

"Depend upon it, my masters," faltered an old crone, who had tottered in to look at the dead body, "there's a judgment in this. I never knew a man struck by lightning, nor a woman either, but what they carried something black in their hearts for a mark."

"Fiddle!" ejaculated the prim lady's-maid; "no-body don't believe in such things now-a-days."

But as Henry Silverton's ear unconsciously took in the whispered asides, he acknowledged the mystic wisdom of the grey old superstition.

She was dead, and he was guiltless of her blood. Yet even then he felt sick and dizzy, in the midst of his great gratitude, like one who has walked in his sleep, and waking, finds himself on the verge of some bottomless abyss.

Grace Auliffe was dead, and her secret had died with her. A. E.

ANCIENT AND MODERN HUMBUGS OF THE WORLD.

No. 2.—OLD GRIZZLY ADAMS.

JAMES C. ADAMS, or "Grizzly Adams," as he was generally known, from the fact of his having captured so many grizzly bears, and encountered such fearful perils by his unexampled daring, was an extraordinary character. For many years a hunter and trapper in the Rocky and Sierra Nevada Mountains, he acquired a recklessness which, added to his natural invincible courage, rendered him truly one of the most striking men of the age. He was emphatically what the English call a man of "pluck." In 1860, he arrived in New York with his famous collection of California animals, captured by himself, consisting of twenty or thirty immense grizzly bears, at the head of which stood "Old Sampson"—now in the American Museum—wolves, half-a-dozen other species of bear, California lions, tigers, buffalo, elk, etc., and Old Neptune, the great sea-lion, from the Pacific.

Old Adams had trained all these monsters so that with him they were as docile as kittens, while many of the most ferocious among them would attack a stranger without hesitation, if he came within their grasp. In fact, the training of these animals was no fool's play, as Old Adams learned to his cost; for the terrific blows which he received from time to time, while teaching them "docility," finally cost him his life.

When Adams and his other wild beasts (for he was nearly as wild as any of them) arrived in New York, he called immediately at the museum. He was dressed in his hunter's suit of buckskin, trimmed with the skins and bordered with the hanging tails of small Rocky Mountain animals; his cap consisting of the skin of a wolf's head and shoulders, from which depended several tails as natural as life, and under which appeared his bushy grey hair and his long white grizzly beard. In fact, Old Adams was quite as much of a show as his bears. They had come around Cape Horn on the clipper-ship Golden Fleeco, and a sea-voyage of three and a half months had probably not added much to the beauty or neat appearance of the old bear-hunter.

During our conversation, Grizzly Adams took off his cap, and showed me the top of his head. His skull was literally broken in. It had on various occasions been struck by the fearful paws of his grizzly students; and the last blow, from the bear called "General Fremont," had laid open his brain, so that its workings were plainly visible. I remarked

that I thought that was a dangerous wound, and might possibly prove fatal.

"Yes," replied Adams, "that will fix me out. It had nearly healed; but old Fremont opened it for me, for the third or fourth time, before I left California, and he did his business so thoroughly, I'm a used-up man. However, I reckon I may live six months or a year yet."

This was spoken as coolly as if he had been talking about the life of a dog.

The immediate object of "Old Adams" in calling upon me was this. I had purchased one-half interest in his California menagerie from a man who had come by way of the Isthmus from California, and who claimed to own an equal interest with Adams in the show. Adams declared that the man had only advanced him some money, and did not possess the right to sell half of the concern. However, the man held a bill of sale for one-half of the "California Menagerie," and old Adams finally consented to accept me as an equal partner in the speculation, saying that he guessed I could do the managing part, and he would show up the animals.

I obtained a canvas tent, and erected it. Adams then opened his novel California Menagerie.

On the morning of opening, a band of music preceded a procession of animal-cages, down Broadway and up the Bowery; Old Adams, dressed in his hunting costume, heading the line, with a platform-wagon on which were placed three immense grizzly bears, two of which he held by chains, while he was mounted on the back of the largest grizzly, which stood in the centre, and was not secured in any manner whatever. This was the bear known as "General Fremont;" and so docile had he become that Adams had used him as a packbear to carry his cooking and hunting apparatus through the mountains for six months, and had ridden him hundreds of miles. But, apparently docile as were many of these animals, there was not one among them that would not occasionally give even Adams a sly blow or a sly bite when a good chance offered; hence Old Adams was but a wreck of his former self, and expressed pretty near the truth when he said:

"Mr. Barnum, I am not the man I was five years ago. Then I felt able to stand the hug of any grizzly living, and was always glad to encounter, single-handed, any sort of an animal that dared present himself. However, I am good for a few months yet, and by that time I hope I shall gain enough to make my old woman comfortable, for I have been absent from her some years."

But Adams was as firm as adamant and as resolute as lion. Among the thousands who saw him dressed in his grotesque hunter's suit, and witnessed the apparent vigour with which he "performed" the savage monsters, beating and whipping them into apparently the most perfectly docility, probably not one suspected that this rough, fierce-looking, powerful demi-savage, as he appeared to be, was suffering intense pain from his broken skull and fevered system, and that nothing kept him from stretching himself on his death-bed but that most indomitable and extraordinary will of his.

After the exhibition had been opened six weeks, the doctor insisted that Adams should sell out his share in the animals and settle up all his worldly affairs; for he assured him that he was growing weaker every day, and his earthly existence must soon terminate.

"I shall live a good deal longer than you doctors think for," replied Adams, doggedly; and then, seeming after all to realize the truth of the doctor's assertion, he turned to me and said: "Well, Mr. B., you must buy me out." He named his price for his half of the "show," and I accepted his offer. We had arranged to exhibit the bears in Connecticut and Massachusetts during the summer, in connection with a circus, and Adams insisted that I should hire him to travel during the summer, and exhibit the bears in their wonderful performances. He offered to go for 60 dols. per week and travelling expenses of himself and wife.

I replied that I would gladly engage him as long as he could stand it, but I advised him to give up business and go to his home; "for," I remarked, "you are growing weaker every day, and at best cannot stand it more than a fortnight."

"What will you give me extra if I will travel and exhibit the bears every day for ten weeks?" asked old Adams, eagerly.

"Five hundred dollars," I replied, with a laugh.

"Done!" exclaimed Adams. "I will do it; so draw up an agreement to that effect at once. But mind you draw it payable to my wife, for I may be too weak to attend to business after the ten weeks are up, and if I perform my part of the contract, I want her to get the 500 dols. without any trouble."

I drew up a contract to pay him 60 dols. per week for his services, and if he continued to exhibit the bears for ten consecutive weeks I was then to hand him, or his wife, 500 dols. extra.

"You have lost your 500 dols.!" exclaimed Adams, on taking the contract; "for I am bound to live and earn it."

"I hope you may, with all my heart, and a hundred years more if you desire it," I replied.

"Call me a fool if I don't earn the 500 dols.!" exclaimed Adams, with a triumphant laugh.

The "show" started off in a few days, and at the end of a fortnight I met it at Hartford, Conn.

"Well," says I, "Adams, you seem to stand it pretty well. I hope you and your wife are comfortable?"

"Yes," he replied, with a laugh; "and you may as well try to be comfortable too, for your 500 dols. is a goner."

"All right," I replied; "I hope you will grow better every day."

But I saw by his pale face, and other indications, that he was rapidly failing.

In three weeks more, I met him again at New Bedford, Mass. It seemed to me, then, that he could not live a week, for his eyes were glassy and his hands trembled, but his pluck was great as ever.

"This hot weather is pretty bad for me," he said, "but my ten weeks are half expired, and I am good for your 500 dols. and, probably, a month or two longer."

This was said with as much bravado as if he was offering to bet upon a horse race. I offered to pay him half of 500 dols. if he would give up and go home, but he peremptorily declined making any compromise whatever.

I met him the ninth week in Boston. He had failed considerably since I last saw him, but he still continued to exhibit the bears, and chuckled over his almost certain triumph. I laughed in return, and sincerely congratulated him on his nerve and probable success. I remained with him until the tenth week was finished, and handed him his 500 dols. He took it with a leer of satisfaction, and remarked, that he was sorry I was a testotaller, for he would like to stand trout!

Just before the menagerie left New York, I had paid 150 dols. for a new hunting-suit, made of beaver-skins, similar to the one which Adams had worn. This I intended for Herr Driestoch, the animal-tamer, who was engaged by me to take the place of Adams whenever he should be compelled to give up.

Adams, on starting from New York, asked me to lend this new dress to him to perform in once in a while on a fair-day, when we had a large audience, for his own costume was considerably soiled. I did so, and now, when I handed him his 500 dols., he remarked:

"Mr. B., I suppose you are going to give me this new hunting-dress?"

"Oh, no," I replied. "I got that for your successor, who will exhibit the bears to-morrow. Besides, you have no possible use for it."

"Now, don't be mean, but lend me the dress, if you won't give it to me, for I want to wear it home to my native village."

I could not refuse the poor old man anything, and I therefore replied:

"Well, Adams, I will lend you the dress; but you will send it back to me?"

"Yes, when I have done with it," he replied, with an evident chuckle of triumph.

I thought to myself, he will soon be done with it, and replied:

"That's all right."

A new idea evidently seized him, for, with a brightening look of satisfaction, he said:

"Now, Barnum, you have made a good thing out of the California menagerie, and so have I; but you will make a heap more. So, if you won't give me this new hunter's dress, just draw a little writing, and sign it, saying that I may wear it until I have done with it."

Of course, I knew that in a few days at longest he would be "done" with this world altogether, and, to gratify him, I cheerfully drew and signed the paper.

"Come, old Yankee, I've got you this time—see if I hain't!" exclaimed Adams, with a broad grin, as he took the paper.

I smiled, and said:

"All right, my dear fellow; the longer you live, the better I shall like it."

We parted, and he went to Neponset, a small town near Boston, where his wife and daughter lived. He took at once to his bed, and never rose from it again. The excitement had passed away, and his vital energies could accomplish no more.

The fifth day after arriving home, the physician told him he could not live until the next morning. He received the announcement in perfect calmness, and with the most apparent indifference; then, turning to his wife, with a smile, he requested her to have him buried in the new hunting-suit.

"For," said he, "Barnum agreed to let me have it until I have done with it, and I was determined to fix

his flint this time. He shall never see that dress again."

His wife assured him that his request should be complied with. He then sent for the clergyman, and they spent several hours in communing together.

Adams told the clergyman he had told some pretty big stories about his bears, but he had always endeavoured to do the straight thing between man and man. I have attended preaching every day, Sundays and all," said he, "for the last six years. Sometimes an old grizzly gave me the sermon, sometimes it was a panther; often it was the thunder and lightning, the tempest, or the hurricane on the peaks of the Sierra Nevada, or in the gorges of the Rocky Mountains; but whatever preached to me, it always taught me the majesty of the Creator, and revealed to me the undying and unchanging love of our kind Father in heaven. Although I am a pretty rough customer," continued the dying man, "I fancy my heart is in about the right place, and look with confidence to the blessed Saviour for that rest which I so much need, and which I have never enjoyed upon earth."

He then desired the clergyman to pray with him, after which he grasped him by the hand, thanked him for his kindness, and bade him farewell.

In another hour his spirit had taken its flight; and it was said by those present that his face lighted up into a smile as the last breath escaped him, and that smile he carried into his grave. Almost his last words were:

"Won't Barnum open his eyes when he finds I have humbugged him by being buried in his new hunting-dress?"

That dress was indeed the shroud in which he was entombed.

And that was the last on earth of "Old Grizzly Adams."

P. T. BARNUM.

(To be continued.)

ADVANTAGES OF CRYING.

A FRENCH physician writes a long dissertation on the advantages of groaning and crying in general, and especially during surgical operations. He contends that groaning and crying are the two grand operations by which nature allays anguish; that those patients who give way to their natural feelings, more speedily recover from accidents and operations than those who suppose it unworthy for a man to betray such symptoms of cowardice as either to groan or to cry. He tells of a man who reduced his pulse from one hundred and twenty-six to sixty, in the course of two hours, by giving full vent to his emotions. If people feel at all unhappy about anything, let them go to their rooms and comfort themselves with a loud bellow, and they will feel a hundred per cent. better afterwards.

In accordance with the above, the crying of children should not be too greatly discouraged. If it is systematically suppressed the result may be St. Vitus' Dance, epileptic fits or some other disease of the nervous system. What is natural is nearly always useful, and nothing can be more natural than the crying of children when anything occurs to give them either physical or mental pain.

Probably most persons have experienced the effect of tears in relieving great sorrow. It is even curious how the feelings are allayed by free indulgence in groans and sighs. Then let parents and friends show more indulgence to noisy bursts of grief on the part of children as of older persons, and regard the eyes and mouth as safety-valves through which Nature discharges her surplus steam.

TRAGIC INCIDENT OF THE SIEGE OF CHARLESTON.

The *Charleston Mercury* tells a touching story:

Miss Anna Pickens, the daughter of Governor Pickens, while ministering to the wounded in the hospitals of Charleston, came in contact with a wounded officer, Lieutenant Andrew De Rochelle. The young people fell in love, and after a short courtship it was arranged that they should be married on the 22nd of last month.

Lieutenant De Rochelle was on duty at Fort Sumter in the morning, and it was determined that the ceremony should take place at the residence of General Boutham in the evening. At the moment the episcopal clergyman was asking the bride if she was ready, a shell fell upon the roof of the building, penetrated to the room where the company assembled, burst, and wounded nine persons, and among the rest Miss Pickens.

We cannot describe the scene that followed. Order was re-established, and the wounded were removed, all except the bride, who lay motionless upon the carpet. Her betrothed, kneeling and bending over her, was weeping bitterly, and trying to staunch the blood that welled from a terrible wound under her

left breast. A surgeon declared that Miss Pickens had not longer than two hours to live.

When the wounded girl recovered her consciousness, she asked to know her fate, and when they hesitated to tell her—

"Andrew," she said, "I beg you to tell me the truth. If I must die I can die worthily of you."

The young soldier's tears were his answer, and Miss Anna, summoning all her strength, attempted to smile. Governor Pickens was almost without consciousness, and Mrs. Pickens looked upon her child with the dry and haggard eye of one whose reason totters. Lieut. De Rochelle was the first to speak:

"Anna," he cried, "I will die soon; too; but I would have you die my wife; there is yet time to unite us."

The young girl did not reply, she was too weak. A slight flush arose for an instant to her pale cheek; it could be seen that joy and pain were struggling in her spirit for the mastery.

Lying upon a sofa, her bridal dress all stained with blood, her hair dishevelled, she had never been more beautiful. Helpless as she was, Lieutenant De Rochelle took her hand, and requested the Rev. Mr. Dickenson to proceed with the ceremony.

When it was time for the dying girl to say yes, her lips parted several times, but she could not articulate. At last the word was spoken, and a slight foam rested upon her lips. The dying agony was near. The minister sobbed as he proceeded with the ceremony. An hour afterwards all was over, and the bridal chamber was the chamber of death.

Lieutenant De Rochelle has sworn to perish in battle against the Yankees, and we are sure he will keep his oath.

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jesuit," "The Pretale," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER XCIV.

As our readers may readily suppose, Mr. Binks did not fail to keep his appointment at the abbey, where Mrs. Bantam was anxiously awaiting his arrival. In honour of his visit she had donned the lavender silk dress—the cause of so many regrets the preceding evening—a cap with bright cherry-coloured ribbons, and a bunch of passion-flowers. Her admirer smiled as he noticed the latter: perhaps he had a keen perception of the fitness of things.

"This way!" she said, as she conducted him, amid the suppressed titterings of the female servants, to her private apartments, which adjoined the suite set apart for the unhappy countess. "I told you," she continued, "I had everything very comfortable about me."

As the gentleman looked round the elegantly furnished room, which had been the poecaptive's boudoir, he observed that she must be very comfortable.

"And not more than I deserve," replied the nurse, mysteriously: "for my place is one of great trust. I am sure," she added, with an air of self-importance, "I don't know what my lord will do, if ever I should—"

Her widow's modesty prevented her proceeding further.

"If ever you should what, my dear Mrs. Bantam?" demanded her wooer, gallantly seizing her hand.

"Go away!" exclaimed the woman, coquettishly: "I declare you men are so persevering. I shouldn't wonder if you tried to kiss me next."

This was a broad hint, but either the gentleman was obtuse, or did not choose to take it. He gravely assured her that such a freedom was furthest from his thoughts.

"Well, I am glad to hear that," observed the lady, trying very hard to appear satisfied; "but so few men properly respect the sex."

Mr. Binks in the most earnest manner declared that he, at least, was one who did.

Tea was brought in, and the strangely-assorted pair sat down *à la table* to discuss their future prospects and the earl's best couching at the same time.

"A housekeeper's must be a very pleasant berth?" observed the gentleman.

"I ain't housekeeper," replied the nurse, mysteriously, at the same time handing him a third cup.

"Indeed! I thought you were."

"I am the nurse!"

"Is his lordship ill, then?"

"No," said Mrs. Bantam, growing more and more confidential in her manner; "but my lady is!"

At the same time she touched her head significantly.

"Ah, poor thing—the rheumatism, no doubt?"

"Rheumatism!" repeated Mrs. Bantam; "nothing of the sort! Mad—at least so the doctors say, and they ought to know; but I know what I know! It's a convenient thing, when a nobleman has a rich wife,

whom he doesn't love, to shut her up as a lunatic. Isn't it?"

Mr. Matthew Binks drew his chair closer to that of the speaker, and taking her red, fat hand in his, pressed it very warmly. Mrs. Bantam looked flustered, but not offended.

"There!" she simpered; "I knew what it would be! You men are all alike. You are a-go'in' to kiss me!"

This time there was no avoiding the honour so plainly hinted at. With a look of resignation worthy of a martyr, the young man drew the harridan towards him, and imprinted a salute upon her cheek.

Who shall say, after this, that the age of heroism has passed?

The nurse simpered, and received it as an atonement for his former coldness. Being a widow, she was perfectly acquainted with the privileges and etiquette of courtship, and threw her arms around his neck. There is no saying how far her feelings might have carried her, when—fortunately for the gentleman—a bell rang in the adjoining room.

Mrs. Bantam released him from her tender embrace.

"Who is that?" inquired her visitor, trying to look disappointed.

"It's only my lady! Never mind her!"

The bell rang again.

"I suppose I must go!" said the woman, spitefully. "She wants more books from the library."

"Can't you send one of the servants?"

"Servants, indeed! No one is allowed to go near her but the doctor and myself!"

So saying, she drew a key from her pocket, and, unlocking a door directly opposite the one they had entered by, disappeared.

No sooner was she gone, than Mr. Binks started from his chair, and, with a hurried step, glided after her. Gently opening the door, which communicated with a corridor, at the extreme end of which was the countess's room, he listened with breathless attention.

"I am sorry to disturb you!" he heard a melancholy voice exclaim, in reply to some coarse observations of Mrs. Bantam's respecting fancies and books; "but I felt so lonely! Pray oblige me!"

The tones struck upon his ear like the well-remembered notes of a song he had heard in childhood. He trembled violently, and passed his hands once or twice over his eyes.

"Poor Alice!" he murmured; "poor Alice!"

When the nurse returned, she found her admirer reading an old newspaper which he had found upon the table.

"More books," muttered the woman. "What with reading and crying, I wonder she has not gone blind before this! But I shan't put myself out of the way for her whims, I promise her!"

Mr. Binks looked very much as if he would have liked to strangle her.

"Perhaps," he observed, "you had better do as she requests! The first trouble is the least: she will only ring again."

"And if she does, I'll cut the wire of the bell—that's how I'll serve her. Though she is a countess, she wasn't borned any better than myself!"

"Indeed!"

"Her father was an old miser, who left her more money than you and I could count, and that's the reason why my lord married her. Would you like to see her?"

The young man involuntarily started from his seat at the proposal.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Bantam; "how pale you look!"

"A little nervousness," answered her admirer, recovering himself; "the fact is, I can't bear the sight of mad people. I had a brother who died mad," he added; "brandy-and-water was his weakness. Poor fellow! it was his only consolation in life. I could not find the heart to be cruel; so, in his last illness, I placed a small tub—Bet's British—by his bed-side: he and the spirits both ran out together."

"Very kind and considerate," observed Mrs. Bantam.

"Well, I reckon that it was considerate," said Mr. Binks, with a knowing smile; "for the governor died only three months afterwards; and that's how I popped into all the tin."

The woman began to think that the speaker was not quite so simple as he appeared. She remembered her own weakness for gin-and-water, and mentally resolved that if ever she became Mrs. Binks, her husband should not place a barrel of her favourite liquor by the side of her bed.

The sound of a carriage was heard rolling rapidly along the smooth gravel walk which led to the mansion. The nurse rushed to the window: the colour fled from every feature of her face, as she recognized the earl and Mademoiselle Athalie. When we say every feature, we ought to have excepted her nose—that retained its hue. Not even the terror she experienced

would blanch that again: time to say nothing of her favourite beverage—had too well seasoned it.

"Ruined!" she exclaimed. "It is my lord!"

The countenance of Mr. Matthew Binks looked equally as blank as the speaker's.

"Can't you conceal me? Put me anywhere!" he said.

Mrs. Bantam was equal to the emergency: never did she make a more striking display of that presence of mind which is the characteristic of her sex. Her first thought was to descend and threaten the servants, if they breathed a word of her having received a visitor.

"Remain here!" she said. "Don't stir till I come back!"

To make assurance doubly sure, the lady took care to render the escape of her admirer impossible; for, as she quitted the apartment, she locked the door after her. Fortunately, in her confusion, she forgot to remove the key from the one leading to the apartment of the countess.

"At last!" sighed the young man; "thank heaven at last!"

Quick as thought he traversed the corridor, at the end of which was a door, partly open. He knocked.

"Come in!" said the faint, sweet voice of the captive.

Those who have long abandoned hope—who, in their misery and despair, have accused even heaven of deserting them—may imagine the wild tumult of joy and surprise which agitated the bosom of Alice, when she recognized in the intruder the faithful Goliath—the companion—almost the friend of her youth. With a cry of delight, she sprang towards him, and clung to his arm, as the lone sailor, struggling with death upon the dark waters of the angry sea, clings to the floating plank which pitying heaven has drifted within his reach. Yes, reader, the wooer of Mrs. Bantam was no other than the goldsmith's assistant—the poor charity boy—who had risked much, and endured more, to ascertain the fate of his once kind mistress.

"Be calm," he said; "pray be calm! Do not lose the few moments which Providence has given us. The earl has arrived."

At the name of her husband the countess shuddered, and burst into a flood of tears. They relieved her over-fraught heart.

The first thought of the unhappy woman was of her child.

"My boy!" she said. "Feel for a mother's agony! Does he live? Is he well? Have they taught him to forget me? Speak!—my heart is breaking!"

"Well—quite well," hastily replied the young man.

"No sooner had you been pronounced insane, by the infernal manoeuvres of his lordship and the female fiend who urged him, than I removed him from her charge—stole him. He has been placed with a kind, good man. He is worthy of you. The day will come when he will avenge you!"

Alice thought not of the avenger; she felt only that her child was saved from the contaminating influence of the governess, and she dropped upon her knees in speechless thankfulness to heaven. The prayer she had breathed in the lonely hours of her captivity had been heard: the weight of an iron hand seemed to be removed, at that instant, both from her heart and brain.

"God bless you!" she faltered; "God bless you, for your kindness to my defenceless boy!"

Every moment was one of agonising suspense to Goliath, who trembled lest the nurse should return, and all chance of further communication be forever prevented. Hastily drawing a letter from his pocket, which he had prepared in the hope of their meeting, he placed it in her hand.

"This," he said, "will explain everything. I dare not remain another instant: we have to deal with funds—reckless alike of pity or humanity. I shall see you again. I will move heaven and earth to effect your freedom. Courage—courage and patience!"

"Stay!" shrieked the countess, as he was about to quit the room; "one moment, for pity's sake! Here—take this!"

She drew from her bosom a sealed packet.

At this instant Goliath fancied that he heard a key thrust into the lock of the nurse's sitting-room. He put the paper into his pocket, and darted through the corridor.

"It is my father's—"

The closing of the door prevented her faithful friend from catching the rest of the sentence.

Just as Mrs. Bantam opened the door Mr. Binks emerged from the opposite one.

"What do you do there?" she demanded, suspiciously.

"Is it you?"

"Who else should it be?"

"Well, I couldn't tell!" answered her pretended admirer, with extraordinary self-possession, considering the agitating interview he had just gone through; "so I thought it best to hide in the passage till I was sure of it!"

"Have you seen my lady?"

"Not such a fool!" replied Goliath, with affected indifference. "Besides, I told you that I couldn't bear to look on mad people, and the reason why. But what the devil," he added, chucking her under the chin, "makes you so particular? Didn't you offer to show her to me yourself?"

All this was uttered so naturally, that the half-formed suspicions of the nurse were gradually dissipated; added to which, she had no time to investigate them, for the sudden arrival of her employer had upset her presence of mind. Her first care was to lock the door which communicated with the apartments of her charge; the next, to dismiss her visitor from the house without exciting observation.

"Follow me," she said "down the back stairs, into the north wing, and through the conservatory! Can you climb?"

"Like a cat!" was the reply.

Mr. Bantam saw her visitor safely from the house by the means she had designated, and returned unsuspected by her own room, to await the summons of Mademoiselle Athalie.

When Goliath reached the hotel, his first care was to ascertain the safety of the packet which Alice had committed to his charge. It was addressed in her own hand—

"To my son, the Honourable Digby Moretown: to be opened only in the event of my death, or on his arriving at the age of twenty-one."

The precaution was a fatal one. Although strongly tempted to break the seal, he felt bound to respect it; but for the injunction he would have done so, and, armed with its contents, compelled the tyrant husband to restore his victim to that liberty of which he had so artfully deprived her. But it was not to be: heaven destined her patience and sufferings a yet longer trial.

That same night he sent for Kelf, and gave him a note, with strict injunctions to deliver it to the nurse in the morning.

"That's all very well," said the keeper; "but my lord has arrived, and I have no wish to lose my place!"

Another five guineas removed his scruple; and he promised not only to give the note to Mrs. Bantam, but, if questioned, to stick to it, through thick and thin, that the writer was his cousin.

The following morning, Mr. Matthew Binks started for London, the packet carefully concealed in the lining of his waistcoat, which it left only to be deposited in the iron safe of the goldsmith, on his return home.

"Doubtless," said the worthy man, "it is intended for no eye but her son's! The outpourings of a mother's heart are sacred; and, much as I should like to read the lines her hands have traced, her injunctions must be respected! You have acted rightly, Goliath. Heaven bless you!"

As the young man never disputed the decisions of Mr. Brindley, he acquiesced, but it was with reluctance; and frequently, when he thought upon the packet, regretted that her uncle had not thought fit to break the seal.

It was hard—very hard—that the precautions which Alice had taken to secure the ultimate rights of her son, should prove the means of prolonging her captivity.

From the hour the will had come into her possession to the one she had parted with it to Goliath, she had kept it concealed upon her person, trusting that heaven would one day point out the means of placing it beyond the reach of her enemies.

(To be continued.)

FLOWERS.—Who would wish to live without flowers? Where would the poet fly for his images of beauty, if they were to perish for ever? Are they not the emblems of loveliness and innocence—the living types of all that is pleasing and graceful? We compare young lips to the rose, and the white brow to the radiant lily; the winning eye gathers its glow from the violet, and a sweet voice is like a breeze kissing its way through flowers. We hang delicate blossoms on the silken ringlets of the young bride, and strew her path with the fragrant bells when she leaves the church. We place them around the marble face of the dead in the narrow coffin, and they become symbols of our affections—pleasures remembered and hopes faded, wishes flown and scenes cherished, the more that they can never return. Still, we look to the far-off spring in other valleys—to the eternal summer beyond the grave, when the flowers which have faded shall again bloom in starry fields, where no rude winter can intrude. They came upon us in spring like the recollections of a dream, which hovered about us in sleep, peopled with shadowy beauties and purple delights, fancy brooded. Sweet flowers! that bring before our eyes scenes of childhood—faces remembered in youth, when Love was a stranger to himself! The mossy bank by the wayside, where we so often sat for

hours, drinking in the beauty of the primroses with our eyes—the sheltered glen, darkly green, filled with perfume of violets, that shone, in their intense blue, like another sky spread upon the earth—the laughter of merry voices—the sweet song of the maiden—the downcast eye, the spreading blush, the kiss, ashamed at its own sound—are all brought back to memory by a flower.

TABLE TURNING.—On the other hand, the table-turning or talking, has been very much laughed at; to speak the truth, this rillery is out of place. To replace inquiry by mockery is convenient, but not very scientific. For our part, we think that the strict duty of science is to test all phenomena. Science is ignorant, and has no right to laugh; a *savant* who laughs at the possible is very near being an idiot. The unexpected ought always to be expected by science. Her duty is to stop in her course and search it, rejecting the chimerical, establishing the real. Science has but the right to put a *visa* on facts; she should verify and distinguish. All human knowledge is but picking and culling. Because the false mixes with the true, it is no excuse for rejecting the mass. When was the tare an excuse for refusing the corn? Hoe the weed, error, but reap the fact, and place it beside others. *Knowledge is the sheath of facts.*—William Shakespeare, by Victor Hugo.

THE summer of 1864 seems likely to be distinguished for a fatal epidemic among locomotives. Within the last month two explosions have occurred, and we have now to record another. On the 1st ult., at noon, a most alarming accident occurred on the London and North-Western Railway, at Overton station, near Peterborough. Just as the 11.55 train from Peterborough had drawn up in front of the station, the boiler of the locomotive exploded with a terrific report, shattering the platform opposite to the station, smashing the windows of the booking-office, and doing very considerable damage. The driver, named Richmond, was slightly injured, but the stoker escaped unhurt, though he, together with the station-master and the passengers, had a very narrow escape. They were all terribly alarmed, as may be supposed, and several of them refused to continue their journey. The ponderous dome of the boiler descended in a field some distance off, and the traffic on the up-line was obstructed for several hours. Strangely enough, in every instance the dome has been the seat of failure.

"A DRAWING ROOM."—Mr. Jerry Barrett has just completed a picture of this subject, as held by the Queen at St. James's, for which purpose Mr. Barrett enjoyed the privilege of being present on several occasions, in order the more faithfully to describe the ceremony. The picture was commenced in the spring of 1862, and by command of the Queen every facility has been afforded to the artist. The Queen, the late Prince Consort, and other members of the Royal Family, occupy the left centre of the picture; and the lady in the act of being presented is the Marchioness of Carmarthen. The portraits are fifty or sixty in number, and conspicuous among them are—the Prince Consort, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cambridge, the Duchess and the Princess Mary of Cambridge, the Dowager Duchess of Sutherland, the Duchess of Wellington, the Marchioness of Ely, Lady Constance Grosvenor, the Duchess of Manchester, Lady Jocelyn, Lord Derby, Lord Palmerston, Lord Russell, the Maharajah Duleep Sing, Duke of Argyll, Lord Clyde, &c. Mr. Barrett having made studies of the throne-room and all its furniture and ornaments, the picture, with its striking portraits, will be received as a version of the subject as faithful as can possibly be rendered.

DERBY AND OAKS.—Since the reign of James I., who founded the Epsom meeting during his residence at Nonsuch, its immediate locality has been regarded as classic ground by our race-loving public. In the little parish of Woodmansterne is Lambert's Oaks, formerly an inn, but latterly a place of some interest to the Jockey Club, since it gave a name to the famous stakes at Epsom races. The house, which stands high, and commands very fine views, was erected by a society called the Hunters' Club, under a lease from the Lambert family. It afterwards became the residence of the unfortunate Lieut.-General Burgoyne, from whom it passed to the eleventh Earl of Derby, whose grandson, Edward Smith Stanley, the twelfth earl, much improved it. Here was given, on the 9th of June, 1734, in anticipation of the marriage of Lord Stanley with Lady Betty Hamilton, the celebrated *fête-champêtre*, the first of the kind in England, under the superintendence of Lieut.-General Burgoyne. This rural festival furnished the general with the subject of a dramatic entertainment, entitled "The Maid of the Oaks," and which, after a few bold touches from Garrick's pen, was performed for the first time at Drury Lane, on November 5, 1774. On May 14 1779, Edward Smith Stanley, the twelfth Earl of Derby, originated the famous Oaks Stakes, so named from his sylvan retreat at Woodmansterne. The first winner

NOTE

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of the Oaks Stakes at Epsom was Bridget, a bay mare, the property of the earl. In the following year (1780), the earl started the Derby Stakes, so named out of compliment to its noble founder. The first winner of the Derby Stakes was Diomed, a chestnut horse. After the death of the Earl of Derby, in 1835, the Oaks estate was sold to Sir Charles Grey, and has since passed to its present proprietor, Mr. Joseph Smith.

FACETIE.

Why is a nobleman like a book?—Because he has got a title.

The last excuse for crinoline is, that the "weaker vessels" need much hoop.

Why is setting up a shop in a bad thoroughfare like opening an oyster?—Because, although you do open it, it won't answer.

Why is a man in difficulties like an ostrich in wet weather?—Because he can't find the dust to cover his bill.

Why is Neptune like a person looking for the philosopher's stone?—Because he's (a) sea-king what never existed.

QUESTION FOR A GLAZIER.—If a young lady has a pain in her side, can she relieve it by wearing a smock?

THERE is a young man in the North so bright that his mother can only look at him through smoked glass, for fear of hurting her eyes!

An Irish girl at play on Sunday being accosted by the priest, "Good morning, daughter of the Evil One," meekly replied, "Good morning, father."

Why should physicians have a greater horror of the sea than anybody else?—Because they are more liable to see (sea) sickness.

"FANCY," said Sydney Smith, once sitting quietly at the Deanery of St. Paul's with some ladies, when he was told that one of the giraffes at the Zoological Gardens had caught cold—"fancy a giraffe with two yards of sore throat?"

In a case recently heard in the Court of Queen's Bench, a witness stated that he had taken his sweet-heart out for a ride, but she had paid half the expenses. The Chief Justice remarked that this was courtship on the joint-stock principle.

"YOUNG ladies are like an arrow; they can't be got off without a beau." Another reason why they are like an arrow: "When they go into your heart, they can't be got out till death."

It was a smart boy who owned that he liked everything good but a good whipping. The same boy liked a good rainy day, too rainy to go to school, and just about rainy enough to go fishing.

"Faith, Jamie! an' what have ye got your stockings on wrong side out for, ye spalpeen?" said one man to another. "Och! be jabbers, Tom, an' don't ye see it is to hide the holes in them," replied Jamie.

WELL-MATCHED.—An intelligent farmer being asked if his horses were well-matched, replied: "Yes, they are matched first-rate; one of them is willing to do all the work, and the other is willing he should."

WHEN Madge was a very little girl, her father found her clauy hands full of the blossoms of a beautiful tea-rose, on which he had bestowed great care. "My dear!" said he, "didn't I tell you not to pick one of these flowers without leave?" "Yes, papa," said Madge, innocently, "but all these had leaves!"

THE COUNTESS'S PARASOL.

The other day at Dieppe, France, just when the promenade on the Terrace was at its fullest, a little gem of a parasol belonging to the beautiful Countess de C— was carried off by the wind, and went gambolling away over the surface of the water. The countess uttered a cry of despair at seeing her pet parasol escape her, for the ivory shaft of this precious parasol was so exquisitely carved that it was considered as a veritable *chef-d'œuvre*.

Amidst a chorus of laughter, lamentations, and interjections, a young dandy sprang over the terrace and swam out to the rescue of the parasol; and the smiles and thanks of the countess were so expressive that two others of her adorers at once sprang after him.

All three were good swimmers, but the wind was blowing stiffly from the shore, and whenever the swimmers thought they had the prize, the provoking parasol would dart away again out of reach. The three wore broad-rimmed straw hats, bound, trimmed, and fastened under the chin with coloured ribbon, common at watering places, and betting went on briskly among the spectators, some declaring for the hat with the black ribbon, others for the yellow, and others again for the green.

At length the black hat, by a stroke of good luck,

caught the runaway, and tying it to the ribbon of his hat, swam back to the shore, where the whole society of Dieppe was assembled, and kneeling all dripping before the countess, he restored to her the lost treasure amid the acclamations of the company.

But the thing was not fated to end so easily. The yellow hat had scarcely regained the shore when he fainted away, and had to be carried back to his hotel.

As to the green ribbon, he, poor fellow, discovered that the action of swimming had loosened the clasp of his watch chain, which, with a superb gold watch, and a dozen *louis d'ors* in his waistcoat pocket, had all gone to the bottom.

Judge of the value which the pretty little parasol will now have in the eyes of its beautiful owner.

ECONOMY AS A FINE ART.—In the autobiography of Dr. Beecher, mention is made of a certain "old Dr. —," who was so economical that he boasted of having kept all his accounts for thirty years with one quill pen, and said he had thought so closely on the subject of economy, that he knew exactly how to lean his arm on the table so as not to take the nap off, and how to set down his foot with the least possible wear to the sole of the shoes."

ORIGINAL IDENTITY.

Professor C—, of one of our flourishing colleges, was an able man, but unfortunately had a hobby, which he rode in season and out of season, much to the annoyance of the students. His was an exceedingly fine-spun metaphysical theory, to the effect that the original identity of a substance is never lost by any transmutation or change which may take place in respect to the substance itself.

One lecture evening, after the worthy professor had expatiated at some length on his favourite topic, an irreverent student asked leave to propose a question, when the following colloquy ensued:

Student: "You see this knife which I hold in my hand?"

Prof.: "Certainly."

Student: "If I should lose the blade, and have a new one put in its place, would it be the same knife afterwards?"

Prof.: "Most assuredly."

Student: "Then, if I should subsequently lose the handle, and get it replaced, would it still be the same knife?"

Prof.: "Certainly."

Student: "Then, if some one should find the original blade and handle, and put them together, what knife would that be?"

The answer of the professor is not reported.

UNFORTUNATE AT COMPLIMENTS.—It is related of a Parisian portrait painter, that having recently painted the portrait of a lady, a critic, who had just dropped in to see what was going on in the studio, exclaimed: "It is very nicely painted, but why did you take such an ugly model?" "It is my mother," calmly replied the artist. "Oh, pardon a thousand times," said the critic, in the greatest confusion. "You are right; I ought to have perceived it. She resembles you very much."

THE LAIRD AND HIS LADDIE.—In his volume on "The Salmon," Mr. Russell does not omit the good story of the Highland laird and his gilly. Leaving behind him a land in which salmon was often a glut in the market, and consequently cheap, the laird went to London, and put up at an inn, where he ordered dinner—a beefsteak for himself, and "salmon for the laddie." On reckoning with his host, the poor Highlander made the discovery that "salmon was salmon" on the Thames, whatever it might be on the Tay; for while he had to pay but a shilling for his own dinner, it cost him a guinea for "the laddie's."

UNBONNETING THE LADIES.—At the Urania Theatre, Berlin, all ladies are required to take off their bonnets, before entering the theatre to take their places. This provision has been found necessary, since, owing to the present fashion prevailing in that article of feminine attire, it is almost impossible for persons sitting behind a lady with her bonnet on to see what is going forward on the stage. At a theatre in Paris the same end has been attained by placing printed bills about the theatre, containing the following announcement:—"All young and handsome ladies are politely requested to take off their bonnets. All others may keep them on."

FEAR OF LORD PALMERSTON.—I remember an incident which occurred some years ago at the Bagin di Lucca, which will illustrate what I mean. An English stranger at one of the hotels, after washing his hands, threw his basinful of soap and water out of the window just as the Grand Duke was passing, deluging his imperial highness from head to foot. The stranger hurried at once to the street, and, throwing himself before the dripping sovereign, made the most humble and apologetic excuses for his act; but the Grand Duke stopped him short at once, saying,

"There, there! say no more of it; don't mention the matter to any one, or I shall get into a correspondence with Palmerston, and be compelled to pay a round sum to you for damages!"—"Cornelius O'Dowd upon Men and Women, and other Things in General," in *Blackwood's Magazine*.

A MATTER-OF-FACT SOLDIER.

Many years ago, while crossing the plains to Santa Fee, General Kearney was some distance ahead with the advance guard. One of the officers belonging to the rear division singled Bob out and sent him ahead with a letter to the general. When he came up with them they had camped, and Bob sauntered into the general's marquee.

"We're gittin' along, general," said he. "Yes, sir," answered the commander. "I wish you'd just look at that hoss o' mine, gen'l, and give me your 'pinion how he'll stand the racket clear through to where we're goin'."

Have you a captain at the head of your company?" inquired the general.

"Wall, we hev," answered Bob.

"Whenever you wish to learn anything in regard to your movements, then," said the general, "inquire of him."

"That's military, is it?" inquired Bob.

"That is military, sir," answered the general.

"Well, general, they gin me a letter for you, but I don't know whether I oughter give it to you in pusson, or send it thro' your orderly, so I'll go back and ask the cap't'n," and back he went sure enough, with the letter in his possession, leaving Kearney speechless with astonishment.

A POINT IN QUESTION.—They are talking of giving beer to cattle. Let 'em put some spirits into 'em, say gin. Well, say you, what kind of gin? Why, say I, as it's for cattle, try Oxy-gin.—*Punch*.

"GENTEEL INDIGENCE."

Little Gent (indignantly): "Reasonable! What 7s. 6d. a-head for half a sole, a outlet, and rhubarb tart? Well, it ain't my idea." Head Waiter (blandly): "Heh, sir, if you'd a' spoken before and, we'd a' perwided a dinner more suited to a style of genteel indigence."—*Punch*.

CHANGE OF NAME.—In consequence of the notoriety of one of the persons interested in the great Nuttall will case, he who was nobody at all, will now be known as somebody Else.—*Punch*.

A HINT.—The telegrams from Germany say that "the prospects of the Duke of Augustenburg have greatly improved." When a swaggering lodger, who established himself on the first-floor, is sent up to the attic, he usually obtains an improved prospect, but seldom boasts much about it.—*Punch*.

"THOROUGH."—Archbishop Laud.

When you do a thing, do it thoroughly. When you break up an establishment, dismiss everybody. We are glad to see that the following advertiser is a root-and-branch man, and on abandoning housekeeping, not only gets rid of his wife, but suggests a satisfactory arrangement for the lady's future life:

"A gentleman, who is breaking up his establishment, has very great pleasure in recommending his coachman and wife: the former to take charge of the stable and drive; and the latter as dairymaid, or to take charge of poultry, or both duties combined. Address, &c."

Except that if he were really a gentleman he would have mentioned the lady before the menial, we think this advertiser a model of thoughtfulness.—*Punch*.

WHY are photographers like the men who go out with water-carts?—Because the more *cartes* they have the more *dust* is laid down.—*Comic News*.

WHAT member of the Commons is best qualified to write about the river, and how should his book be announced? Henley-on-Thames.—*Comic News*.

A NATURAL INQUIRY.—1st *Intelligent Youth to Museum Attendant*: "Please, sir, will you tell us where the Elgin marbles are—and please may we play with 'em?"—*Comic News*.

A DISTINCTION AND A DIFFERENCE.—What's the difference between a candidate at an election, and an elected member of the House of Commons? One stands for a place, and the other sits for it.—*Comic News*.

A CRYING CRITICISM.—As we were, the other day, passing along a suburban road, we observed a man proclaiming, with stentorian lungs, that he had got what he called "al-fresco-fine-arts-imp's." Thinking the man was a wag, and carrying out some practical joke on the Royal Academy, we went up to him. Guess our annoyance when we found that his basket contained nothing but shrimps, and what our disgust was when he explained that he was merely calling out "all fresh caught, fine large shrimps!"—*Comic News*.

A LESSON IN ENGLISH.—Last week a lad of sixteen was fined one shilling and sixpence for despoil-

g a hawthorn-tree in Regent's Park. This slight
suet—a *nulctum in parco*—will perhaps teach him
matically that the parks are not public property
with a right to pick—in short, that "May" is not to
be construed into a permission.—*Fun*.

THE "ORDER" OF THE BLACK EAGLE.—"Let
the dogs of war."—*Fun*.

BATHER TOO BAD.—The unfortunate Austrian
soldiers who were killed on the "Schwarzenberg"
were buried with all the honours of war at Cuxhaven,
and over their graves was inscribed, "They died for
their country." Now, considering that nearly all the
soldiers on board the Austrian vessels are Italians, the
inscription alone being German, this inscription strikes us
as being slightly sarcastic.—*Fun*.

POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE.—In spite of the gout he
suffering from, there are plenty of people who would
stand in the Premier's shoes. Of course, Lord
Russell tries to laugh off the stories about the violence
of the disorder, but he cannot deny its existence in
fact. His latest on the subject is a riddle, which he
asks us to insert, and as we are always ready to oblige
even the Premier of England, here it is. "Why does
the gout turn a man into a shell-fish being? Because
it makes him a limp-it." Not bad for an invalid. But
he said a much smarter thing to Earl Russell when he
called on him. "Laid-up in ordinary!" said the
Foreign Secretary. "Oh, dear, no!" said the Vis-
count; "only taken in tow!"—*Fun*.

THE ARRANGEMENT, we believe, between the Crown
and the claimants or defendants in the matter of the
annals, that the former shall pay £220,000 for the
ships, that sum to include the completion of the vessels
for Messrs. Laird and Co., according to the original
plans and specifications, and that the several rights,
whatever they may be, are reserved to either side.

THEATRES BURNED DOWN WITHIN THE LAST HUN-
DRED YEARS.—The theatre of Amsterdam, in 1772;
Astley's Amphitheatre, in 1794, in 1803, and 1811;
the Surrey Theatre, in 1805; Covent Garden, in 1808
and in 1855; Drury Lane, in 1809; the Adelphi at
Edinburgh, in 1858; the Lyceum at London, in
1833; the Falmouth, in 1792; the Glasgow Theatre,
in 1780, 1829, and in 1845; the Manchester Theatre,
in 1789; the Olympic in London, in 1849; Her
Majesty's Theatre, in 1788; the London Pavilion, in
1856; the Quebec Theatre, in 1846; the Saragossa
Theatre, in 1788; The Richmond Theatre (Virginia),
in 1811; the Park Theatre of New York, in 1848;
and the Bowery at three different times. The burning
of the Saragossa Theatre cost the lives of six hundred
persons, and that of the theatre of Quebec was nearly
as disastrous.

INACTIVITY.—How wearily the hours pass away
when the body and mind are inactive. "Nothing to do!"
is the frequent exclamation of many young people
when every vegetable in the garden is surrounded by
a patch of weeds, and the books in the library are
mouldy for want of proper use and care. How often
is it the case that we see the young of both sexes
indulging in vain, trifling amusements, and everything
around them going to rack and ruin through neglect;
and yet they have nothing to do. Parents too fre-
quently allow their children to live in luxury and
ease; to grow up in the paths of idleness, becoming
accustomed to all kinds of vice, until they arrive at an
age to assume the responsible duties of life, which
they are incapable of performing; then it is that
parents lament the early training of their offspring,
and see the folly of becoming their servants instead
of masters. Time is precious, and not a moment
should be wasted; in whatever station of life we are
placed there is always something to do, and we
should never lose an opportunity of making ourselves
useful. Seize time by the forelock; let not the golden
hours escape unnoticed, for our lives are but of short
duration, and it is highly important that we should
employ the short time allotted to us to good advan-
tage.

STATISTICS.

MOVEMENT OF SPECIE.—The total imports of gold
bullion and specie during the first four months of
1864 amounted to 5,533,504*l.*, against 6,544,183*l.*
in the corresponding period of 1863, and 3,448,779*l.*
in the corresponding period of 1862. The largest con-
tributors of gold continue to be Australia, Mexico,
South America (Brazil excepted), and the West In-
dies and the United States. Thus Australia sent us
gold to the value of 1,150,168*l.* in the first four
months of 1864, against 1,498,201*l.* in the correspond-
ing period of 1863, and 2,556,773*l.* in the correspond-
ing period of 1862; Mexico, South America, and the
West Indies, 2,091,441*l.* this year, against 1,555,509*l.*
in 1863, and 554,723*l.* in 1862; and the United
States, 1,896,826*l.* this year, against 3,116,072*l.* in

1863, and 1,635,287*l.* in 1862. The total exports of
gold bullion and specie in the first four months of
1864 amounted to 5,688,217*l.*, against 5,234,599*l.*
in the corresponding period of 1863, and 2,725,784*l.*
in the corresponding period of 1862. To these totals
France contributed 2,913,277*l.*, against 1,584,848*l.*
in 1863, and 1,238,314*l.* in 1862; Spain and the Cana-
ries, 507,797*l.*, against 797,137*l.* in 1863, and 360,249*l.*
in 1862; Egypt, 1,105,659*l.*, against 686,772*l.* in 1863,
and 458,978*l.* in 1862; and Brazil, 735,468*l.*, against
458,173*l.* in 1863, and 4,999*l.* in 1862. The total im-
ports of silver bullion and specie in the first four
months of 1864 amounted to 4,865,440*l.*, against
3,612,396*l.* in the corresponding period of 1863, and
2,994,187*l.* in the corresponding period of 1862. To
these totals Belgium contributed 677,950*l.*, against
168,721*l.* in 1863, and 272,947*l.* in 1862; France,
606,220*l.*, against 310,937*l.* in 1863, and 452,773*l.* in
1862; and Mexico, South America (except Brazil),
and the West Indies, 2,695,654*l.*, against 2,418,381*l.*
in 1863, and 1,674,979*l.* in 1862. The total exports
of silver bullion and specie amounted to 4,166,046*l.*
in the first four months of 1864, against 3,979,588*l.*
in 1863, and 3,602,774*l.* in 1862. Of these totals 749,187*l.*
went to France, against 351,454*l.* in 1863, and 288,702*l.*
in 1862; and 3,049,566*l.* to Egypt, against 3,262,035*l.*
in 1863, and 3,189,894*l.* in 1862. Of the large total
set down to Egypt this year, 755,761*l.* was coin
(chiefly for China, &c.), and 2,293,805*l.* bullion (chiefly
for India.) It results from these figures that an
equilibrium was nearly established this year between
the exports and imports of gold and silver bullion
and specie, the total imports having been 9,898,944*l.*,
while the total exports were 9,854,263*l.* In the cor-
responding period of 1863 the total imports were
10,156,579*l.*, and the total exports 9,214,187*l.*; and
in the corresponding period of 1862 the total imports
were 8,442,966*l.*, and the total exports 6,328,558*l.*

APPLE-BLOSSOMS.

You may sing of roses fresh and fair,
Twine orange-blossoms in your hair,
May gather violets blue and white,
I choose a gem that's far more bright,
'Tis found among our northern hills.
And with perfume the air it fills:
Pink apple-blossoms I higher prize
Than any flower beneath the skies.

Sweet little treasures, pink and white,
You truly are a welcome sight!
I love the flow'rets great and small,
But apple-blossoms best of all.

When blue-skied May has come along,
And robins sing their sweetest song,
'Tis then that first they do appear,
To clothe the trees in bridal gear.

But soon they fall like falling snow,
(It seems too bad, we love them so—
To see them fall,) all o'er the ground,
On rock and knoll, and grassy mound.

And as the seasons onward roll,
I often through the forest stroll,
Far o'er the hillside and the plain,
And wait to greet the gems again.

E. R. B.

GEMS.

SHOW may easily be purchased; but happiness is a
home-made article.

RECLUSINESS has its uses. Men, like trees, must
stand far apart to grow large.

THOSE who reprove us are more valuable friends
than those who flatter us. True progress requires
either faithful friends or severe enemies.

BOASTING seldom or never accompanies a sense of
real power. When men feel they can express them-
selves by deeds, they do not often do so by words.

PERFORM a good deed, speak a kind word, bestow a
pleasant smile, and you will receive the same in re-
turn.

WHOEVER would oblige himself to tell all that he
has done, would oblige himself to do nothing that he
would be anxious to conceal.

THERE is a thread in our thoughts as there is a
pulse in our hearts; he who can hold the one knows
how to think, and he who can move the other how to
feel.

THERE is nothing more important than whether
you send forth your child as the seed-corn of a harvest,
or the powder-train of a mine, to destroy itself and
everything with it.

CHILDHOOD has little retrospection; its heart and
soul are in the future, a glorified dream. Memory, with
all its pleasures and pains, is for the old, and chiefly

for the prematurely old; but youth is a vision of the
Islands of the Blest, it tells its own fairy tale to itself,
and is at once the inventor and hero.

WITH the most ardent natures it is either love or
hate; there is no twilight in the tropics.

THERE are calumnies that kill women, but do only
a slight injury to men, as certain reptiles kill with
poison in the warm months, and only wound in the
cold ones.

HAVE frank explanations with friends in cases of
affronts. They sometimes save a perishing friend-
ship; but secret discontent and mistrust always end
badly.

MISCELLANEOUS

It is said that the New Zealanders are supplied with
powder and rifles by American whalers.

On the 10th of June the Crystal Palace has been
opened ten years. During that period it has been
visited by the extraordinary number of more than
fifteen millions and a quarter of persons.

A poor man named Keats was taking gulls' eggs a
few days ago at Bollard Cliff, near Swanage, in the
Isle of Purbeck, when his foot slipped, and he fell a
height of 300 feet and broke his neck.

ORIGIN OF THE GRAIN IN WEIGHT.—The grain
weight has come down to us from olden times, and is
mentioned in the "Magna Charta." It is described as
"a grain of wheat gathered from the middle of the
ear."

MR. GEORGE HUDSON.—Mr. George Hudson, the
ex-Railway King, and former M.P. for Sunderland,
has at last obtained a settlement of his large claim
upon certain Spanish railways (said to have been as
much as £200,000), and after settling all claims
against him, he is now in possession of a handsome
fortune.

Two colossal equestrian statues are about to be
erected at the entrance of the Champs Elysées to
Francis I. and Napoleon I. They are to be of bronzed
plaster, and are merely placed there to enable the jury
and the public to judge of their merits. Should they
be approved of, they will be cast in metal and placed
in the Louvre.

TEN YEARS' MEN.—We are informed that the bat-
talion of Rifles which has been marching up to
Peshawar will lose about 300 ten-years' men in 1864,
and 500 ten-years' men in 1865; in other words, that
nearly the whole battalion will come home and take
their discharge. Can the authorities do nothing to
save the enormous expense, not to speak of the infinite
damage to the service? Cannot some inducement be
held out to induce them to re-enlist in India?

CURIOS.—A curious specimen of the finny race
was caught in the water close to the beach, Wollon-
gong, a few days back. It was about a yard in length,
and had the head of an eel with a snake-like body.
A profusion of bright-yellow spots, as large in
diameter as peas, marked the tail on both sides.
When thrown on the beach after being caught, it
disgorged several small fish. The body bears a close
resemblance to that of the four-toed "saurophis," or
snake-lizard of Southern Africa, but was minus the
rudimentary toes and legs. It was a true fish, and
we believe new to ichthyology.—*Australian Paper*.

MR. THACKERAY'S LAST PARAGRAPH.—I shall not
attempt to tell that story of the battle of the 23rd
September, which ended in our glorious captain strik-
ing his own colours to our superior and irresistible
enemy. Sir Richard has told the story of his disaster
in words nobler than any I could supply, who, though
indeed engaged in that fearful action in which our
flag went down before a renegade Briton and his
motley crew, saw but a very small portion of the
battle which ended so fatally for us. It did not com-
mence till nightfall. How well I remember the
sound of the enemy's gun of which the shot crashed
into our side in reply to the challenge of our captain
who hailed her! Then came a broadside from us—
the first I had ever heard in battle.

CARRYING OFF THE DERBY, THE OAKS, AND A
BRIDE IN ONE WEEK.—In 1824, Robinson, the
jockey, made a wager (in which he obtained long odds)
that he would, in that year, and in the week, win the
Derby and Oaks races, and also get married!—all
three somewhat problematical occurrences, the chances
of success as regards the first two events being a mat-
ter determined by mathematical calculation, and the
latter, we presume, being almost reduced to a certainty
beforehand by previous courtship. Of course the
chances were in favour of those who laid odds; but
on this occasion the odds were flooded for Robinson
won the Derby on Cedric, the Oaks on Cobweb, and
his wife—no, what we mean to say is, and he also got
married within the week.—*Horse-racing: its History*,
&c.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EMILY.—See reply to "Jane and Emily."
 E. L.—Handwriting very good indeed.
 T. EDWARDS.—The work will not be published at present.
 B. J.—We cannot inform you. Apply to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, Somerset House, London.
 JOSEPHUS.—We have carefully read your very long statement, and have come to the conclusion that we cannot advise you; you must place the case in the hands of a solicitor.
 R. T. O.—Eating leaves of parsley, saturated with vinegar, will prevent the disagreeable effect on the breath after eating onions.
 C. F. K.—We do not know any better method of removing warts than by peeling off the thickened skin, and then carefully applying lunar caustic or acetic acid.
 A. Q.—We could not undertake the publication of a volume of poems for you; and therefore decline perusal of the MS.
 P. PENANCE.—We cannot supply the information, which we apprehend is to be obtained in your own town from any milliner.
 HORACE J. A.—The lines, "A Sailor's Visit," are much too long for our available space, and are declined with thanks.
 JANE AND EMILY.—Handwriting of both is good; that of "Jane" slightly the best, because evincing rather more firmness.
 COLLEEN BAW'S handwriting is of average feminine excellence; it would look better if the "Colleen" paid stricter attention to the straightness of her lines.
 G. WRIGHT.—Whatever the sum charged as legacy duty against freehold or copyhold property, you must pay it on becoming possessor; the amount would depend on the value of the property.
 O. P. M.—The marriages of dissenters, whether of the German or any other church, must, to be legal, be performed in a place of worship duly licensed for the solemnization of marriage.
 LAW.—As your question evidently points to a family dispute respecting the intestate's chattels, we cannot advise you otherwise than to settle by friendly arbitration whatever differences there may be in dividing the property.
 REBECCA, LUCY, H.—The name Rebecca comes from the Hebrew, and means fat or plump; Lucy is the feminine of the Latin name Lucius, which means shining; Henry comes from the German, and means rich lord.
 E. M. K., who is a young widower in a good position, having a very comfortable home and good business in the country, wishes to meet with some young lady who would make an affectionate wife.
 R. J. A.—You may clean a delicate coloured silk, or, indeed, any silk, without injury to the colour or fabric, by using the pulp of a few potatoes, finely scraped, with water. (Handwriting excellent.)
 BENJAMIN M.—Ink spots may be removed by oxalic or nitric acid. As a general rule, all spots occasioned by acids may be removed by alkalis, and those caused by alkalis may be removed by acids.
 L. C.—Copies of new books are not sent to the library of the British Museum immediately after publication; we believe six months may elapse before publishers are compelled to forward copies.
 AMATEUR.—The moss-rose originated in Provence. The musk-rose was first obtained from Italy; the double yellow rose was brought to England from Syria in the seventeenth century. London's work is the best.
 F. H.—The flower known as the dahlias was so named from a clever cultivator of it, a Swede named Dahl. It was first produced in England in the garden of Holland House.
 W. N.—A license to kill game costs £3; from 6th April to 31st October, £2; from 1st November to 31st April, £2. Of course you must not commit a trespass to recover your game.
 HETTY P. J. replies to "Valparaiso," that she is nineteen, has dark hair and eyes, good figure, considered fine looking, has moderate expectations at twenty one, has no objections to go abroad, and would like to exchange *carte-de-visite*.
 ANIELMA, a young lady aged twenty-three, of good family, possessing a private income of £300 a year, wishes to meet with a suitable help-mate to journey through life with, who must be tall, good-tempered and distinguished.
 L. D.—The Kangaroo is an indigenous animal of Australia, but we think its name is not an Australian word; at least, it has been asserted that no such word can be found in any of the native languages.
 DR. AMPHLETT.—We cannot discuss the causes of magnetic sleep or trance; which has served, at all times, to perplex wise heads than yours appears to be, by the strange breach which it appears to make between the bodily and mental functions. The lines are declined with thanks.
 X. K.—In No. 68 we gave a good recipe for removing freckles; but you may try the following, which is also very efficacious:—Dissolve in half an ounce of lemon-juice, one ounce of Venice soap, adding of oil of bitter almonds and deodorized oil of tartar, each a quarter of an ounce. Place the mixture in the sun till it becomes of the consistency of

ointment, when add three drops of oil of rhodium; it is then fit for use. Wash the face or hands at night with elder-flower water, and then apply the mixture, which in the morning is to be washed off with rosewater.

J. A.—The price of Vol. I. of THE LONDON READER (which contains 28 numbers) is 4s. 6d., and the postage to Liverpool is 1s. 4d. The publisher will forward the volume on receipt of postage-stamps for this amount. Any bookbinder will stamp your name upon it.

S. J. M.—Common licenses enable persons of full age, and minors with consent of parents or guardians, to be married in the church of the parish in which one of them has resided the specified time. They are procured at Doctors' Commons, or from any surrogate, and cost about £3 10s.

A. G.—Narcotics are medicines which stupefy and diminish the activity of the nervous system. Taken in small doses, however, they generally act as stimulants. Among them you properly include alcohol, camphor, ether, the hop, and opium.

EXTRACTS.—We believe an examination of candidates for the appointment of student interpreters in China, Japan, and Siam will take place in July. The requirements will be the same as formerly, and the limits of age 18 to 24. Earl Russell settles the list of candidates.

E. O.—Assistant inspectors of education must be recommended by the inspector of the district, and their examination is extremely rigorous. The appointment if made will be probationary for six months, and terminable for untidiness or misconduct.

ELLA.—The quotation—"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever," is the first line of a poem of Keats, entitled "Endymion."

G. G. M.—In Scotland nothing further is necessary to constitute a man and woman husband and wife beyond a declaration of mutual consent before witnesses, or such declaration made in writing without witnesses. Such a marriage is legal in all respects.

CLAUDE FOXTAINE.—It is from remembering the action of a dream, so long as the dream lasts, that somnambulists generally meet with no accidents in perilous positions during their sleep-walking. We cannot answer your other question.

ENMA R. M. M.—We believe that Miss Florence Nightingale is living, in unmarried seclusion, among the dales of Devon, though, we regret to add, as an invalid. (Handwriting leaves nothing to desire except a little more firmness; hair, light brown and dark brown, the former finest.)

J. H. M.—Warts and moles may be removed by frequently applying a small drop of acetic acid to the surface. Care must be taken, however, that the acid do not touch the skin, as it will occasion pain and inflammation. See also reply to "C. F. K."

J. W. J.—Whenever correspondents are kind enough to forward us original poems of moderate length and of average ability, we are always ready to insert them. The stanzas on "Homs" are, however, much too lengthy, and are declined with thanks.

A. M. V., a tolerably good-looking clerk in the War Office, aged twenty-three, is in quest of a wife who could make home happy. The lady must be pretty and of cheerful disposition; income of no consequence, but good education and ladylike manners indispensable.

E. H.—No, we think not; we have always understood that it was from the natural engineering, so to speak, of the underside of the leaf of the great water-lily *Victoria regia* that Sir Joseph Paxton derived the self-supporting principle which he applied to the first Exhibition Building.

FLORENCE Y. 2.3.—Executors are bound to discharge the trust reposed in them in strict compliance with the terms of the will, and they have no right whatever to deviate in the slightest degree from its provisions. (Handwriting very fair.)

T. W. R.—The use of the wedding ring is supposed to have been originally a heathen custom. Indeed this consideration had well nigh led to the abolition of the ring in marriage under the Commonwealth; the Puritans, as Butler rhymes, being very desirous of abolishing.

That tool of matrimony, a ring.

UNHAPPY WIFE.—It would be out of our province to review a case decided by the Court of Queen's Bench. The ordinary rule is that the party losing a suit must pay the costs on the other side; and your solicitor should not have saddled you with them, as far as we can see. Consult another legal adviser, and be sure he is a respectable one.

CLAUDIA.—To make a wash for sunburn take two drachms of borax, one drachm of Roman alum, one drachm of camphor, half an ounce of sugar candy, and a pound of ox-gall. Mix, and stir well for ten minutes, three or four times daily for a fortnight; when clear and transparent, strain through blotting-paper, bottle, and use when required.

GEORGE.—Eighteen years of age, 5 ft. 5 in. in height, has fair hair and complexion, a fresh colour, with dark blue eyes, and considered rather good-looking; is a good housekeeper, would make a loving and industrious wife; and desires to enter the estate of matrimony with a gentleman, young, steady, fond of home, a Protestant, and tall and dark.

C. C. C.—An estate "held by the courtesy of England" is that to which a man is entitled, on the death of his wife, in the lands and tenements belonging to her, providing there were issue of the marriage capable of inheriting the estate; in this case he is tenant during his lifetime "by the courtesy of England."

ERNO.—The term handicap, or "hand i' the cap," was originally a game played by three persons, and its application to horse-racing has probably arisen from one or more persons being chosen to make the award between individuals who put down equal sums of money on entering horses for a race.

J. WORTLEY.—Any remedy to prevent the growth of superfluous hair is doubtful, many even are injurious if not dangerous. The safest plan is to use a pair of tweezers constantly, and the skin, having been washed twice a day with warm, soft water, should be bathed with the wash commonly known as milk of roses. Your writing is good.

EDITH AND MAY are much inclined to dispose of their hands and hearts in matrimony. "Edith" is eighteen years of age, tall and graceful, with dark complexion, black curly

hair, and dark eyes, small mouth, pearly teeth, and a Greek nose. "May" is rather shorter than "Edith," with abundant figure, fair complexion, slight colour, with splendid flame curly hair, blue eyes, small mouth, and white teeth; and is very domesticated.

HENRY JOLLIFE.—You must forward to the publisher stamps for the required number of the LONDON READER, and 12 stamps for the postage—three numbers being transmitted through the box-post for one stamp. Handwriting with a little more practice would be good enough for a clerk at the entering desk.

L. R.—Infirmary of temper is no doubt a grievous affliction, both to the individual personally, and every one who has any relation with its unhappy possessor. But it is a conclusive reason why you should abstain from marriage. Perhaps married life might, by affording you an opportunity of exercising your affections, work in your case a reformation.

A BIRD.—If you know that your relatives are still living in China, but are ignorant of their address, we can suggest no better plan to discover them than advertising in a newspaper published in Hong Kong, which any foreign advertising agent will undertake to do for you. With regard to your other question, you should apply to Sir George Grey, Secretary of State for the Home Department.

NIL DESPERANDUM, notices that being of the ripe age of twenty, he is sadly in want of a wife; whom he stipulates must not be under five and twenty or over two and thirty years of age (a young widow not objected to), and the lady be tall, and of dark complexion so much the better. He is 5 ft. 7 in. in height, rather dark, in a good position, and, after marriage, will have an income of £200 per annum.

TWO DESIRES OF EMPLOYMENT.—It would be perfectly practicable for ladies possessing a knowledge of drawing to learn the art of engraving on wood. The necessary instruments would not be expensive, and the remuneration to good artists is very fair. Proficiency in the art, however, is an easy attainment, and procuring employment difficult.

LIZZIE, having turned the point of "sweet seventeen," thinks it a shame she is not yet "engaged," and is very anxious to be so. Is 5 ft. 3 in. in height, a blonde, with a neat figure, and will on coming of age possess an annuity of £120 a year. Candidates must be in a good permanent position, and fond of home.

G. C. R.—Temporary clerks in the Board of Trade are not admitted until after examination as to their health, moral character, and competency by the Civil Service Commissioners. It is only a weekly engagement, and the requirements are merely elementary. The limits of age are from 17 to 45.

F. L.—Any natural born subject of her Majesty is free to apply for admission into the Civil Service of India, provided he comply with the usual requirements. You are late to send an application to compete in the present year's examination; it should have been forwarded before the 1st of May.

S. L.—Perhaps you will act more wisely not to insist any further; though, as the civil law, "whatever is given begeth them that are promised in marriage hath a condition that it may be had again, if marriage ensue not. However, this extends only to gloves, rings, bracelets and such like small wares."

EUROCLIA.—We know of no means by which a short neck can be made longer, nor any by which protuberant ears can be made to grow closer to the head. "These be gifts," as Dogberry would say, of dame Nature, who will have her way. To make eyelashes grow long, you need only simply clip off the ends about once a month; at least this is the method practised by the beauties of the East.

C. N.—We cannot do better than refer you to the last published returns of the Board of Trade. The term "cotton" comes to us, very nearly as we use it from the Arabic, in which language it is called *katun*; in Egyptian it is *gotos*; in Spanish *algodon*; but in German *baum-wolle*, that is, tree-wool, the Germans generally avoiding the introduction of foreign words into their language.

L. K., who is between four and five and twenty, tall, fair, abundant hair, domesticated, affectionate, fond of music, and at a future day will possess some property, wishes to obtain a matrimonial introduction to a gentleman, who must be tall, about thirty years of age, steady, good-tempered, a Protestant, and respectable. "L. K." would not be indifferent to "Frank" the widower.

R. W.—No, we do not think port wines are the most strengthening for an invalid to take. Astrigent and posset from brandy they certainly are, and may be serviceable as gentle tonics; but the gallic acid in them renders them unfit for weak stomachs. They do not exhilarate in the same degree as light French wines; and if habitually taken, are pernicious.

BUY LEON.—The following is Dr. Erasmus Wilson's lotion for promoting the growth of the hair: Eau de Cologne, two ounces; tincture of cantharides, two drachms; oil of rosemary and oil of lavender, of each ten drops. We may state once for all, that the practice of dyeing the hair is decidedly injurious; but to darken it you may use a pomade composed of nitrate of silver, cream of tartar, ammoniac, and prepared lard.

D. T. H.—Fair hair is generally associated with a sanguineous and lymphatic temperament, fine and white skin, blue eyes, and a mild expression of countenance. Black hair, on the contrary, is usually connected with a bilious habit, a muscular development, dark and yellowish skin, black eyes, and a bold and audacious manner. Red hair is associated with a peculiar constitution, closely resembling the fair type.

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